

## King, Mubarak discuss peace process

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Monday discussed the latest developments in the peace process, particularly on the Palestinian-Israeli track. The King and President Mubarak also discussed bilateral relations during the telephone call. King Hussein assured Egyptian president about his health condition.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراي

## Last batch of F-16 fighters arrive in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Three F-16 aircraft arrived at King Abdullah Air Base in Marka, the United States Information Service (USIS) said in a press release. The airplanes are the last batch of the \$215 million "Peace Falcon" programme extended to Jordan and announced by Former U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry during his visit to the Kingdom on Jan. 7, 1996. The Peace Falcon programme includes 12 F-16A single seat air defence fighter aircraft, four F-16B air defence fighters/trainers in addition to pilot training courses in the U.S.

Volume 23 Number 6800

AMMAN TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1998, DHUL HIJJA 3, 1418

Price: Jordan 200 fils

Ross: Diminishing hopes

## Netanyahu's aides shoot down reports on deal; Sharon boycotts meeting with Ross Israeli troops fire rubber-coated metal bullets, tear gas as Palestinians mark Land Day with demonstrations

Combined agency  
dispatches

A U.S. diplomatic offensive to rescue Israeli-Palestinian negotiations neared its end on a bleak note on Monday, with presidential envoy Dennis Ross citing diminishing hopes for Middle East peace. "Obviously the stalemate begins to diminish the hopes that people have for seeing a very different Middle East and for building and achieving peace," Mr. Ross said at the Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheikh after briefing President Hosni Mubarak. In Cairo, Egyptian state television quoted informed sources as saying Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria would soon hold a high-level meeting to discuss the U.S. role in Middle East peace-making and the latest American initiative to revive it. It gave no date and provided no details.

Meanwhile, the leading hawk in Israel's government, Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, boycotted a meeting with Mr. Ross Monday, claiming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was negotiating a West Bank withdrawal deal behind his back. Mr. Netanyahu invited Mr. Sharon and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, considered the cabinet's main moderate, to a meeting with Mr. Ross to discuss the scope of a long-overdue troop withdrawal from the West Bank, the prime minister's office said.

But Mr. Sharon refused to go, complaining that Mr. Netanyahu was preparing a compromise pullback plan without consulting him or other ministers in government. Mr. Sharon's office said. Mr. Ross, wrapping up a four-day Mideast shuttle, on Monday failed to win agreement from Israelis and Palestinians on U.S. proposals.

The deadlock triggered new clashes between Palestinian stone throwers and Israeli troops. Palestinian protesters chanted "Death to America" and burned U.S. flags.

In the West Bank towns Bethlehem and Al Bireh, Israeli troops fired tear gas

and rubber-coated steel bullets at hundreds of Palestinian school students, and several were injured.

Mr. Ross returned later on Monday to Israel where he held another round of talks with Mr. Netanyahu.

Prior to his departure, Mr. Ross was scheduled to speak by phone with Palestinian second-in-command Mahmoud Abbas since Palestinian President Yasser Arafat was abroad. Palestinian officials said.

Mr. Ross has been trying to win support for a U.S. proposal for an Israeli withdrawal in stages from 13.1 per cent of the West Bank, with each step accompanied by Palestinian security gestures.

Mr. Netanyahu denied Israeli media reports that a compromise was being worked out and that he had increased his initial withdrawal offer from nine per cent to 11 per cent.

"We have not discussed specifics on percentages, and therefore reports of a supposed agreement are not true," Mr. Netanyahu said, adding that he did not expect Mr. Ross to conclude a deal on this trip.

Palestinian officials said they were concerned that the United States was ready to modify its own initiative under Israeli pressure. "We feel that this is a real test for American political will and the ability to withstand Israeli intransigence," said Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian cabinet minister for higher education.

"Ross has failed to extract from the Israelis a compliance with the requirements of the peace process and implementation with the agreements," In a U.S.-backed agreement signed last year, Mr. Netanyahu had pledged to carry out three troop pullbacks by this summer. However, he later said he would go ahead with only one withdrawal before launching talks on final borders. The Palestinians have said they would not accept any changes in agreements already signed.

Mr. Netanyahu hinted Monday that he was softening his position, saying he was ready to discuss an addi-



MARKING LAND DAY: Palestinian youths carry away a wounded protestor after he was struck by a rubber-coated bullet fired by Israeli soldiers on Monday during clashes outside the West Bank town of Ramallah. Thirteen Palestinians were injured in the West Bank while thousands of Palestinians marched in annual protests against confiscation of their lands (AFP photo)

## EU backs Cook over Israeli settlements row

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union (EU) on Monday expressed strong backing for British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook after his clash with the Israeli government over Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

At their monthly meeting in Brussels, EU foreign ministers issued a statement endorsing the approach taken by Mr. Cook on a March 17 visit to Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

"Europe is standing right behind him [Cook]," said German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel.

Mr. Cook's meeting with a senior Palestinian official at the site sparked a furious reaction from Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who promptly cancelled a dinner he was due to give for the foreign secretary.

In a sign of their determination not to be seen to be backing down in the face of Israeli pressure, the ministers took the unusual step of publishing a summary of Israeli settlement activity for the last three months of last year, based on monitoring by EU consulates in Jerusalem.

In a statement, the foreign ministers reiterated their concern at the continuing deadlock in the peace process and called for an early U.S. initiative to kickstart negotiations.

tional withdrawal with the Palestinians. However, the Palestinians reportedly insisted that the Americans be present at such talks, an idea Mr. Netanyahu rejects.

Mr. Netanyahu denied a report in the Maariv daily that he was considering a partial freeze on Jewish settlement construction in the West Bank in exchange for Palestinian acquiescence to a large-scale Jewish settle-

ment project on occupied land in Jerusalem.

"We are not talking about a settlement freeze at any stage," Mr. Netanyahu said. "That is not part of the agreement and so it wasn't raised."

On Sunday, Mr. Ross had met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat who, according to Israeli officials, has not signed on to the idea of Palestinian reciprocal

steps for Israeli troop pullbacks.

In a demonstration of just how violent the climate is, a carload of explosives that authorities believed was meant for use in a terror attack went off prematurely on Sunday in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

A Palestinian man was

(Continued on page 7)

## Majali: U.S.-Jordan ties are at their best

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has described His Majesty King Hussein's visit to the U.S. as very successful and that it contributed towards further promoting bilateral relations.

Speaking to reporters upon his return to Amman, Dr. Majali said King Hussein also underwent medical checkups which proved him to be in very good health.

According to the prime minister, King Hussein and the U.S. administration discussed Jordanian-U.S. rela-

tions which he described as at their best. He added that the American leaders have expressed their admiration and appreciation of King Hussein and his wise leadership as they displayed total confidence in the King and asked for his advice.

"Bilateral relations are excellent militarily and economically," said Dr. Majali, adding that the U.S. has pledged to provide Jordan in 1999 with \$225 million in economic and military aid as they did in 1998. He also said the U.S. has agreed to supply the Jordanian Armed Forces with

needed modern weapons. Referring to the peace process, Dr. Majali said that the King feels that the Americans are seriously exerting efforts to bridge the gap between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Dr. Majali said the King discussed the Iraqi question with the U.S. leaders, stressing that a direct American-Iraqi dialogue was a basic requirement for solving the outstanding issues. The prime minister said the Americans are not totally against this idea and will study it.

## Iraqi, Syrian ministers hold talks in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi Health Minister Umid Medhat and his Syrian counterpart Mohammad Iyad Al Shani examined ways to strengthen cooperation in their field at the beginning of a Syrian-Iraqi medical week here Monday.

Mr. Medhat informed Mr. Shani, the first Syrian minister to visit Baghdad since a thaw in ties last year, of his ministry's activities under the U.N. embargo in force since the

1990 invasion of Kuwait, official Baghdad radio said.

Mr. Shani pledged "Syria's support for the brotherly Iraqi people in their struggle for a lifting of the unjust embargo," the radio reported.

A day after he arrived with a convoy of 12 trucks loaded with food and medical supplies, the Syrian minister took part Monday in the opening of a week-long medical seminar between the two countries.

Relations between Syria and Iraq, which are ruled by rival wings of the Baath Party, have improved since last May and in June they reopened their border, closed since 1982, to trade.

Ties have been severed since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, when Damascus sided with Tehran. Syria also took part in the U.S.-led multinational coalition which evicted Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1991.

## S. Arabia says it has uncovered facts behind Dhahran blast

MECCA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has uncovered the facts behind the 1996 Dhahran bomb blast which killed 19 U.S. servicemen. Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef Ben Abdul Aziz announced Monday.

"The Saudi general intelligence services have made great efforts for us to know everything on this incident," Prince Nayef told a press conference in Mecca, western Saudi Arabia.

"All the facts connected to this crime are now in our hands. An announcement will be made at the appropriate time," he said.

The interior minister said the Gulf Arab kingdom was still requesting the extradition of a Saudi suspect in the bombing, Hani Abdul Rahim Al Sayegh, from the United States.

The June 25, 1996 truck bombing targeted a military housing complex for U.S. airmen in Dhahran, eastern Saudi Arabia.

Sayegh, accused of taking part in preparations for the attack, was extradited from Canada to the United States, as part of a deal to provide information in exchange for facing a lesser charge.

## Iraqis call on U.N. to scrap 'no-fly' zones

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqis called Monday for U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, as a signatory of last month's accord on arms inspections, to scrap the "no-fly" zones imposed on the north and south of Iraq.

"The ban on Iraqi aircraft overflying our territory is in contradiction with Paragraph 2 of the accord between Iraq and the United Nations," a group of 156 Iraqi personalities wrote in a message to the U.N. chief.

MPs and trade union leaders were among the figures who signed the petition, a copy of which was received by AFP.

Article 2 of the Feb. 23 accord on arms inspections states that "the United Nations reiterates the commitment of all member states to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq."

The Iraqi petition called for Mr. Annan "to work to annul the air exclusion zones, which

are neither based on resolutions of the U.N. Security Council nor of the General Assembly."

Western allies set up a northern "no-fly" zone in 1991 saying it was to protect Iraqi Kurds from attack by Baghdad, and a southern zone was imposed the next year for the protection of Shiite Muslims.

The zones, covering more than half of Iraq's territory, are not based on any U.N. resolutions.

## Lower House deputies differ on performance in first session of Parliament

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The active performance of the four-month-old Lower House has surprised many Jordanians who had expected the mostly tribal and pro-government deputies to rubber stamp official policies, observers and analysts said.

However, despite winning high marks, the 80-seat House has in the eyes of many politicians and deputies remained toothless because it failed to reverse controversial government policies, including the privatisation scheme and Jordan's participation in Turkish-Israeli-U.S. military manoeuvres.

Pro-government and tribal leaders won 62 seats in the House, while Islamists and pan-Arab nationalists, who oppose the peace

treaty with Israel and tough IMF-agreed economic reforms, clinched the rest.

The powerful Islamist-led opposition boycotted the race to protest what it said was a steady erosion of parliamentary powers and public freedoms under succes-

### NEWS ANALYSIS

sive governments, helping feed a popular notion that the next House would be powerless.

Yet the assembly managed to inject some life into the country's musty political atmosphere, subjecting the government to bruising debates on domestic and foreign policies, politicians said.

But it failed to reverse government policies on controversial issues, including the much-opposed pri-

vatization scheme and a ban on pro-Iraqi rallies at the height of U.S.-Iraqi tensions.

Deputies themselves showed division in assessing their performance after Parliament's first four-month-session ended on Sunday.

"This Parliament had a much better performance than the previous ones," claimed First Deputy speaker Yousef Shraideh. "Unlike its predecessors which only wanted to argue for the sake of argument, the opposition in this Parliament is a genuine one that cares for the country."

But fellow Deputy Nazih Ammarin disagreed. "From my experience in this Parliament, I believe that the government is capable of passing any law," said Dr. Ammarin, who was re-elected for a

second four-year term in the latest ballot.

Before that, Dr. Ammarin, an independent Christian doctor from Karak, served as deputy in 1984 when martial law rules were in force, limiting Parliament's scope of public criticism of government policies.

Others, including deputies, said they believed the current assembly failed to exercise its legislative authority and failed to act as a watch-dog over government policies, two major functions of the House.

"The House's legislative authority is paralysed mainly due to the 'one-person one-vote' electoral law, and because of the lack of cohesion and cooperation among members," Dr. Ammarin said.

"We even failed to present the government with one suggestion for a draft law

[during the four-month-old session]," he said.

The opposition has long criticised the "one-person one-vote" system as aimed at reducing their representation in Parliament. They say that in a tribal society such as Jordan, voters would cast their one ballot according to family considerations and not political affiliations.

"Deputies in this [the 13th] Parliament were not elected according to merit but according to tribal affiliations," one deputy told the Jordan Times.

Abdul Latif Arabiyat, secretary general of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party and former Lower House speaker, said the House failed to even monitor government policies.

"When the government feels that there is a strong watch-dog over it, it thinks twice before introducing

any law or policy," he told the Jordan Times.

Others questioned the professional qualifications of a House, which has only five lawyers among its members.

They claimed it lacked the political in-depth that many in the previous houses had, especially in the House that was elected in 1989, months after Jordan launched democratic reforms.

"In 1989, there was a strong and credible opposition bloc in the House, and there was much more objectivity then," Dr. Arabiyat added.

Twenty-two Muslim Brotherhood members won seats in 1989, the first elections since 1967. In 1993, the IAF, the political arm of the Brotherhood, saw its power fall to 16 deputies in the House after the govern-

ment introduced the "one-person one-vote" formula.

Deputies in 1989 challenged the government on a daily basis and Prime Minister Mudar Badran had to include six Brotherhood deputies in his short-lived cabinet to ensure a vote of confidence.

Despite scepticism, however, the 120-day session was packed with surprises.

A visit to Israel in December by two deputies, an Islamist lawmaker and a liberal colleague, generated waves of condemnation inside the House, keen to resist any form of normalisation with Israel since the 1994 treaty.

Two months later, the House was taken by surprise when Lower House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour and a team of eight deputies accompanied His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Hassan on the first high-level visit to Tel Aviv since ties soured after Israel's failed attempt to assassinate a Hamas leader in Amman in September.

Government sources said the inclusion of deputies from many political shades in the official delegation was aimed at giving the impression that the Jordanian-Israeli peace process enjoyed popular backing and was not only limited to the government.

However, 17 deputies stormed out of the House to protest the visit at the start of the session that followed the delegation's return.

On Feb. 4, 23 deputies also demanded the resignation of former information minister, Samir Mutawi, for allowing the Arabic Song

(Continued on page 7)



## Saudi crown prince visits Hamas founder Yassin in Jeddah hospital

JEDDAH (AFP) — Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz visited Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, founder and spiritual leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), Monday at King Khaled Hospital in Jeddah, the official SPA news agency said.

This was the first time Riyadh announced the pres-

ence here of Sheikh Yassin, who arrived in Saudi Arabia at the beginning of March and made the lesser Muslim pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca.

He then entered the hospital, which is under the Saudi National Guard commanded by the crown prince, for ear treatment.

SPA said Sheikh Yassin expressed his "thanks and his respect for King Fahd and the crown prince for their assistance to the Palestinians and their just cause."

Sheikh Yassin, 61, is trying to get his hearing back in one ear and receive treatment for an infection in the other which doctors say could affect his brain, according to his entourage.

The Hamas spiritual guide was freed in October after seven years in an Israeli prison in exchange for the release of two Israeli agents captured in Amman following an assassination attempt on Hamas official Khaled Misha'al.

Hamas has been behind most of the deadly suicide operations against the Israelis.

## Opposition official calls for Palestinian leadership meeting

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) called Monday for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to hold a meeting of the heads of major Palestinian groups to "assess the Palestinian situation."

Fahd Suleiman of the political office of the Palestinian opposition group said in a statement that such a meeting is necessary to evaluate "the current situation of

the Palestinians who suffer from the expansion of Israeli settlements and the intransigence of [Israeli Prime Minister] Benjamin Netanyahu's government."

He also said the meeting, which would be held in an Arab capital, would include Nayef Hawatmeh of the Damascus-based DFLP, George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder and

spiritual guide of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas). They would discuss "restructuring Palestine Liberation Organisation institutions," Mr. Suleiman said.

Mr. Arafat, who was informed two weeks ago of the plan for the meeting and supported it, told a DFLP delegation in the West Bank town of Ramallah that "the issue is being studied," the Palestinian official said.

## Palestinian gets three years for kidnap, bombing plots

LOD (AFP) — A Palestinian was sentenced Monday to three years in jail by a military court for planning to kidnap Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and bomb a mall in the city last year, officials said.

Mohammad Halil Hamada, 20, from Sur Baher outside Jerusalem, confessed to planning the kidnapping and bombing with three other members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), court officials said.

Hamada told interrogators that he joined Hamas only two months before being arrested and during that time he and two other Hamas members tested security at the Jerusalem mall by carrying pieces of metal hidden in bags past the guards.

The court convicted Hamada to three years in jail plus an additional four-year suspended sentence in a plea bargain agreement worked out with the prosecution.

"We're talking about a man who was a member for only two months and was only 19 when he joined," Hamada's lawyer, Jawad Boulous, told army radio.

"He wasn't an organiser of the cell and planned the acts but never carried them out."



CAR EXPLOSION IN RAMALLAH: A Palestinian policeman Monday stands near the wreckage of a car destroyed in an explosion in the West Bank city of Ramallah. The car was destroyed when a bomb was being prepared by a Palestinian militant for an anti-Israeli attack. One Palestinian was killed in the explosion (AFP photo)

## Islamic Jihad vows to continue fight against Israel

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Nearly 10,000 people turned out for a Land Day march here Monday on the anniversary of the killing of six Israeli Arabs protesting land confiscations by Israel, organisers said.

Ramadan Abdullah Shalah, chief of the Palestinian group Islamic Jihad, called on the mostly Palestinian crowd during the march at the Yarmouk camp at the southern end of Damascus to continue the fight against Israel.

"The resistance will continue until victory and the eviction of the Israeli aggressor from all Arab territories is

achieved," Mr. Shalah told AFP, adding that Islamic Jihad is "supporting the resistance with all our forces."

Islamic Jihad has claimed responsibility for a number of suicide bombings in Israel during the past few years. Colonel Abu Moussa, the leader of another Palestinian group, Fateh-Intifada, harshly denounced Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in a speech for "betraying" his people and "legitimising the [Israeli] occupation by signing the Oslo accords."

Organisers said nearly 10,000 people from 10 Palestinian opposition organisations based in Damascus participated in the march.

Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine took part in the event.

Land Day marks the anniversary of the 1976 killing of six Israeli Arabs by Israeli border guards during demonstrations against the confiscation of land and was marked by Arab-Israelis and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Monday.

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## Former Bethlehem mayor Freij dies in Amman at 80

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday delegated Chief of the Royal Court Fayez Tarawneh to visit the Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery to offer his condolences to the Freij family on the passing of Elias Freij, the former Palestinian minister of tourism and former mayor of the city of Bethlehem.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan delegated his advisor,

Michael Harnaneh, for the same purpose. Acting Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour expressed Jordan's sadness on the death of Freij, who died Sunday evening. He paid tribute to the man who he said spent his life working to serve the Palestinian people and carrying out his national duty.

Dr. Ensour said Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji will represent



the government at the funeral, which will be held Tuesday at the Nativity Church of Bethlehem.

## Flooding kills 5, injures 7 in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Five people have been killed and seven others injured in floods caused by torrential rain in western and central parts of Iran in the past two days, the official IRNA news agency reported Monday.

Two members of a family were killed and three others injured in Chaglund region of western Lorestan province after the roof of their house collapsed from flooding.

A river in Khoramabad, the main town in Lorestan, overflowed and water surrounded 10 nearby villages.

In another rural region in Lorestan, occupied by nomads, one person was killed and four injured. Homes in 70 villages were either destroyed or severely damaged. Flooding has closed main roads and destroyed bridges, cutting links with 560 villages.

Two sisters drowned after a

river overflowed in the village of Nazmakan in south-western Kohgiluyeh-Boyer-Ahmad province, and rescuers are still searching for their bodies.

In the western provinces of Khuzestan and Kermanshah, vast areas of farms have been inundated by water and crops destroyed. According to local officials in Kermanshah, the level of water in rivers there have been raised by up to five metres.

## Iran warns of future Israeli 'aggression' on south Lebanon

BEIRUT (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi said here Monday that Tehran backed a decision by Beirut to reject an Israeli offer to withdraw from the buffer zone it occupies in southern Lebanon.

Mr. Kharazi, speaking at a press conference after talks with his Lebanese counterpart, Fares Bouez, also warned of "future Israeli aggressions" on southern Lebanon.

"Israel wants a pretext to enable it to start its campaign against southern Lebanon at any time," said Mr. Kharazi who arrived here on Monday from neighbouring Syria, where he met Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and other Syrian officials.

Mr. Kharazi said he backed Lebanon's rejection

of an Israeli offer to withdraw from the "security zone" it occupies in south Lebanon in return for guarantees that Beirut will put a halt to anti-Israeli attacks from the area.

"The objective of the proposal is to eliminate the points of strength [of the Arabs] in the region, particularly Lebanese-Syrian coordination," Mr. Kharazi said.

Lebanon and Syria, the main powerbrokers in Lebanon with 35,000 troops in the country, have both rejected the Israeli proposal.

Mr. Kharazi, whose country is the chief backer of anti-Israeli Hizbollah guerrillas in south Lebanon, said: "When Israel withdraws [from southern Lebanon] then the resistance will have truly achieved its objective."

During his three-day visit

here, Mr. Kharazi is scheduled to meet President Elias Hrawi, Prime Minister Rafik Nabih Berri, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and leaders of the Maronite and Sunni and Shiite Muslim communities.

Before leaving Damascus, Mr. Kharazi told the official Syrian news agency SANA that Israel's "expansionist" policies were a "danger for the countries of the entire region."

"Israel constitutes a great threat and the continuation of its expansionist policies is a danger for the countries of the entire region," he said.

Mr. Kharazi also described his visit to Syria, one of Iran's closest allies in the Arab world, as "very positive."

## Sudanese newspaper publisher abducted, threatened by 'mafia' over reports — paper

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Armed men abducted the publisher of a private Sudanese newspaper and warned him they would burn his offices and press if it printed more articles on "mafia" usury, the daily reported Monday.

The men offered Al Rai Al Aam's board chairman and publisher, Ali Ismail Atabani, a lift as he was walking to the mosque on

Friday, but when he got into the car, one of the "mafia" gang put a pistol to his neck and he was threatened by the gangsters, who also insulted him, the paper said.

Mr. Atabani has filed a complaint with security officials who have begun an investigation, the paper said. Chief editor Abdullah Obeid also notified the press and publications council and the Sudanese

Journalists Union of the brief abduction and threat. Al Rai Al Aam earlier reported that several farmers and businessmen have been jailed for failing to repay loans at exorbitant rates of interest to money-lenders and has called for a campaign against usury.

The paper on Monday appealed to the head of state, President Omar Al Bashir, to intervene in person to curb usury and urged the legal authorities to issue laws prohibiting such practices.

It has also called on usury victims to file lawsuits against usurers.

The paper vowed that it would continue with its anti-usury campaign, saying that the unacceptable practice "has sent tens of the mafia victims to prisons."

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### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 .....Cartoon — C.R.O.  
16:30 .....French programmes  
18:00 Quiz Show — Small Talk  
18:30 .....Drama — Border town  
19:00 .....Le Journal  
19:15 Doc. — De Cause Affet  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Pride and Joy  
20:00 .....What Would You Do?  
20:30 .....Encounter  
21:10 .....Drama — Acapolo Bay  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:30 Feature Film — "She Leads Two Lives"  
23:59 .....Metro Cafe  
00:30 .....End of T.X.

### PRAYER TIMES

04:04 .....Fajr  
05:22 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
11:40 .....Dhuhr  
15:12 .....Asr  
17:58 .....Maghreb  
19:16 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweidhih, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel.  
4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel.  
4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel.  
4622366  
Anglican Church Tel.

4624855/4624811.

St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.

Amman International Church Tel. 865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932

St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4623541

Church of Presentation, Sweidhih Tel. 5920146

The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church 771331

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Cold and rainy weather conditions will prevail during the day

with skies cloudy to partly cloudy and winds northwesterly moderate. Temperatures are expected to rise slightly in the afternoon and there will be a chance of scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman .....05/14  
Aqaba .....11/23  
Deserts .....04/15  
Jordan Valley .....10/19  
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 23 Humidity readings: Amman 96 per cent, Aqaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh .....5519220  
Dr. Rubi Sukkar .....896457  
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib .....865456  
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih .....798104  
Ferdows pharmacy .....778336  
Al Asema pharmacy .....4637055  
Al Salam pharmacy .....4636730  
Yacoub pharmacy .....4644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy .....4637660  
Nairoukh pharmacy .....4623672

IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ameh .....250080  
Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Rabah Al Bourini .....990312  
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....4637111  
Civil Defence Department 5661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....4630341  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777  
Fire Brigade .....4617101  
Blood Bank .....775121  
Highway Police .....843402  
Traffic Police .....896390  
Public Security Dept. ....4630321  
Hotel Complaints .....5605800  
Price Complaints .....5661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints 897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....4623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs .....5661101  
Jordan Television

773111

Radio .....Jordan

Water Authority .....5680100

J. Electricity Authority .....815615

Electric Power Co. ....4636381

RJ Flight Information .....44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport .....44-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....5921199

The Islamic Abdi .....56661317

Hussein Medical Centre Tel. 836813, 836856

Luzmila .....4630195

Khalidi Maternity .....4644281/6

Akileh Maternity .....4642441/2

Jabal Amman: Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman. ....4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani .....5607071

Shmeisani Hospital .....5669131

University Hospital .....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 5667227/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir .....7751111/26

Army, Marka .....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50

Amal Hospital .....5674155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

Zarqa National Hospital

Ibn Sina Hospital .....09900560

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

Greek Catholic Hospital

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

06:30 .....Damascus (RJ)

06:45 .....Sanaa (RJ)

07:15 .....Aqaba (RJ)

07:15 Jeddah, Aqaba (add)

09:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

09:20 .....Abu Dhabi (RJ)

07:50 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:00 .....Aqaba, Paris (RJ)

11:15 .....Vienna, Brussels (RJ)

12:00 .....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)

12:15 .....Cairo (RJ)

12:35 .....Frankfurt (RJ)

13:00 .....London (RJ)

15:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

18:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

20:20 .....Jeddah (RJ)

20:40 .....Damascus (RJ)

21:00 .....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

22:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

02:25 .....Amsterdam (KL)

03:00 .....Athens (OA)

15:40 .....Munich (YP)

15:45 .....Istanbul (TK)

17:30 .....Rome (AZ)

19:30 .....Dubai (EK)

21:20 .....Tel Aviv (LY)

21:40 .....Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

08:15 .....Aqaba (RW)

09:30 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)

17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

17:55 .....Tel Aviv (RW)

20:30 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)

21:50 .....Aqaba (RW)



## Princess Basma launches programme to include men in family planning

AMMAN (J.T.) — "Together for a Happy Family" was the title of the campaign launched last yesterday under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma to draw attention to the importance of including men in family planning in order to achieve higher standards in both societal and economic sectors.

According to a Queen Alia Fund (QAF) press release, Princess Basma stated that while the current health care situation is improving, it can make greater strides in a shorter time if men are made aware of the importance of their participation and discussion with their wives in this crucial area.

"This project is unique in the sense that it enhances men's participation to reach joint decisions related to family health. Previous efforts have focused on women, but this campaign utilises a new advanced concept of men's participation that serves as a model that should be adopted in all other development areas if success is to be achieved," the Princess added.

The campaign will focus on two dominant themes. The first is an awareness project that includes the participation of national leaders in association with the ministries of awqaf and Islamic affairs,

health and social development. The project includes forming groups comprising three members, including a doctor, a social expert and a religious scholar, according to a report from the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

The second campaign is a press and media campaign that will target all citizens.

Princess Basma noted the level support offered by the government, religious leaders, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations in this project, which is being coordinated by the National Population Commission, said the QAF statement. She also distributed awards to 25 national and international organisations providing support to the programme.

Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi said in his speech that Jordan has witnessed a number of developments in health services in the last two decades. The ministry works through 307 health centres throughout the Kingdom to provide care for mothers and infants, he added.

However, he said the clinics are primarily set up for women and most of the front line workers are women who are culturally inhibited from addressing men on many

## Princess Basma opens workshop

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma, the Princess Basma Women's Resource Centre (PBWRC) began a two-day workshop in cooperation with the UNDP on "Global Environmental Facility's (GEF) small grants programme in Jordan," according to a press release Monday.

The GEF's small grants programme aims to support and promote community-level initiatives addressing global environmental challenges, led by the NGO community.

At the opening of the ceremony, Princess Basma addressed an audience of representatives of the NGO community and governmental agencies. She stressed the importance of partnerships in facing environmental challenges, and stressed the important role of women's organisations in this regard, the statement said.

Jorgan Lissner, UNDP resident representative, emphasised the significance of the GEF programme, while praising the Jordanian government for its support of "such a decentralised approach that aims at empowering women and men at the community level to take responsibility for their immediate environment." Mr. Lissner also gave an overview of the medium-sized grant scheme, another component of the GEF programme.

During the workshop, participants will be acquainted with the GEF programme's small grant scheme, and guidelines for writing fundable proposals. The workshop also aims at exploring ways in which to promote the role of local communities to improve their livelihood and conserve natural resources. Topics to be covered include desertification, global warming, biodiversity and international water, the statement said.

health issues, especially reproductive health.

In his address, Lewis Lucke, director of USAID in Jordan, also spoke on the need to involve men in the family planning and their

wives' pregnancies. He added that immense efforts have been made to enhance health standards in the Kingdom, which he said has witnessed growth in the primary care infrastructure.

## Police questioning suspects in JD272,000 armoured car robbery

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Authorities Monday said they were questioning several suspects in connection with the robbery on Sunday of JD272,000 from an armoured car in the Jweideh area, south of Amman.

"We are questioning the driver of the armoured vehicle about what happened on the morning of the incident," said Brigadier General Hisham Ensour, director of the Amman Police Department.

According to the police official, the driver of the armoured vehicle informed the authorities that he was waiting outside one of the banks in the central market in Jweideh for his partner to return with bags of money

from the bank, "when a man wearing a police uniform with the rank of first lieutenant approached him and asked him for his driver's licence."

"The driver claimed that the alleged police officer drew a gun and asked him to drive to a deserted area," Brig. Gen. Ensour told the Jordan Times.

The driver of the armoured vehicle also claimed that a rented car, driven by two other suspects, followed them until they reached a deserted area, held him at gun point, emptied the armoured vehicle of money and fled the scene, the police official said.

"The driver of the armoured vehicle informed us that he then pulled his gun, shot at the fleeing suspect's car and struck it," he said.

Brig. Gen. Ensour would

not rule out the possibility of the armoured car driver's involvement in the incident, nor would he rule out the possibility of the involvement of police officials.

"All scenarios are possible at this time, but our focus now is the driver's story," he added.

### Three arrested in connection with jewellery store robbery

Brig. Gen. Ensour also announced the arrest of three men who allegedly attempted to rob and kill the owner of a jewellery shop in downtown Amman.

He said the three men, a Jordanian, aged 22, an Egyptian, 25, and an Algerian, 28, plotted to rob and kill the shop owner after monitoring him

for a month. "The suspects saw the shop owner leaving his shop daily carrying a suitcase and thought he was carrying goods and money in it," the police official said.

In the meantime, he maintained, police received information about the three men and sent undercover agents to monitor the shop.

He said the three men were arrested on Saturday while attempting to rob the shop owner. An iron bar, a wet rug and a bag were found in their possession at the time of their arrest, he added.

According to Brig. Gen. Ensour, the three men confessed to their crime, were transferred to the criminal prosecutor and are expected to be charged with armed robbery and attempted murder.

## Sixth American computer show opens today

By Ahmed Naser  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, the Sixth American Computer Show will begin today at 7:30 p.m. at the Radisson SAS Hotel.

The annual computer fair, organised by the American Business Centre of the U.S. embassy, features 29 companies from various sectors of Jordan's infant computer industry.

"The participating companies include well-established local distributors of American products that will display the latest advances in U.S. computer hardware and software, as well as new services."

Highlights of the fair will include the inauguration of an on-line service that gives prices of computers according to their components, as well as the official launching of a new Internet Service Provider (ISP), Jordan Electronic Network Services (JOIN), which will manage a demo Internet cafe during the expo.

Seven of the participating companies will hold seminars to introduce other new advances.

After it begins offering its services, JOIN will be the fifth Jordanian ISP. According to sources within the industry, there are roughly 6,500 Internet subscribers in Jordan — there are over 65 million Internet users around the globe.

The expo is open to businesspeople only Wednesday and Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 a.m., free of charge upon the presentation of a business card. The public is welcome on the same days from 5:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., for an admission fee of 500 fils.

In the spirit of last year's show, attended by approximately 6,000 individuals, companies will offer promotional deals on services and computers during the two-day fair.

The show is sponsored by Aramex, BYTE-Middle East, FirstNet, Global One Communications (Jordan), Ideal Group (Apple and Compaq), Jordan Mobile Telephone Services (Fastlink), Radisson SAS Hotel Amman, Sinam Integrated Systems and NCR corporation.

## Srouf to lead Jordan's delegation to parliamentary meeting in Namibia

AMMAN (Petra) — A Jordanian parliamentary delegation led by Lower House of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srouf leaves Friday for Namibia to take part in the 99th meeting of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU), which will be held from April 6-11.

Mr. Srouf is expected to attend a meeting of Arab delegations on the sidelines to coordinate the stands of Arab countries on the issues to be discussed at the IPU meeting.

The IPU meeting's agenda covers world economic political and social questions.

means of avoiding conflicts, establishing peace in countries plagued by conflict, the right of refugees to repatriation, combating AIDS and promoting democracy around the world.

Mr. Srouf is expected to deliver an address to the meeting outlining Jordan's economic, social and political policies.

He will also review developments in the Middle East peace process, Jordan's contributions to the cause of peace, and human rights issues, and will call attention to attempts in certain countries

to distort the image of Islam.

The delegation to the IPU meeting has prepared several working papers on various aspects of Jordanian policies to be submitted, according to Mr. Srouf, who noted that his team will exert efforts to support the Palestinian National Council's bid for full membership in the IPU.

Mr. Srouf will be accompanied to the meeting by deputies Ali Abul Ragheb, Fawzi Tumeih, and Mohammad Bataineh, Senator Jawdat Shoul, and Parliament Secretary General Mohammad Masallah.

## Court overturns convictions of four for plotting anti-Israel attacks

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation has overturned a December 1997 State Security Court ruling convicting four men of possessing illegal weapons and plotting attacks against Israel in the Palestinian territories, one of their attorneys said.

Defence Attorney Mohammad Hantoush told the Jordan Times Monday that the court ordered a retrial of Abdul Rahim Youssef, 25, Mujahed Abdul Jawad, 29, both of whom received 10-year prison sentences, and Sa'oud Mohammad, 24, and his 21-year-old brother Issa, who both received 15-year terms.

In its Dec. 29 ruling, the State Court first sentenced all four men to death, but immediately commuted their sentences "because the defendants had no criminal record, and because they were apprehended before committing any act."

"The defendants' acts of possessing explosives and plotting attacks against Israel is a threat to the national security of our Kingdom," the court then ruled.

But in its ruling last week, the Court of Cassation said the State Court based its ruling only on the defendants' own confessions in front of the state prosecution, "whose investigation procedures were improper," Mr. Hantoush said.

The court said the state prosecutor, who arrested the four suspects on July 16, 1997, began interrogating them almost two weeks after their detention.

The prosecution had charged that the four men obtained two handgrenades and automatic weapons to infiltrate Israel through Wadi Araba in southern Jordan during the month of Ramadan to launch an assault. During the trial, the Moham-

had brothers testified that they had indeed planned to attack Israel but changed their minds because they supported families and buried the weapons under a tree at their house.

The defendants' attorneys repeatedly contested the investigation procedures and claimed that their clients were forced to confess after they were subjected to torture by the security forces.

However, the court rejected these allegations stating that "the defence failed to present any evidence to prove that their clients were subjected to torture."

The prosecution had also alleged that the four were affiliated to an outlawed group, Bay'at Al Imam (pledge of allegiance to the leader), of which 10 members were convicted by the State Security Court last October on charges of attempted sabotage and lese majeste.

## Visiting European cultural delegation debates translation of literary heritage

By Jumana Abu Hannoud  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A European cultural delegation specialised in contemporary Arab literature and translation is currently visiting Jordan as part of efforts to boost cultural exchange activities under a project named "Mémoires de la Méditerranée."

The team met with Jordanian intellectuals, translators, writers, artists and journalists at Amman city hall after arriving last week and both sides held a lively debate.

One writer voiced a general concern about the extent to which the Western reader could understand and accept contemporary works since, she said, European concern in Arabic culture is usually limited toward the exotic, stereotypical ideas of the "harem" (restricted women), anti-Islamist books, or stories about a restricted love affair between two people from different religious backgrounds.

The delegates defended their work, saying that such individual translations are simply governed by what publishers think

would sell better. Mémoires de la Méditerranée is a group funded by the European Cultural Foundation as part of efforts to stimulate the translation and circulation of refined contemporary Arabic literature in the attempt to familiarise European readers with aspects of Arab heritage while reducing stereotypes.

It pays special attention to autobiographical works because they portray personal views, experiences and testimonies that are instrumental in enhancing European readers' insight and understanding of Arab society and culture today.

One of the books translated in the 1996-1997 period, Khaled Ziyadeh's "Friday, Sunday," an intimate account of his childhood memories in Tripoli (Lebanon), "evokes the sociological transformations of that city," said one delegate.

Along the same track, Mémoires also translated Abdul Rahman Munif's "Sirat Madina" (Biography of a City) last year and published it in five different European languages.

In "Sirat Madina," Mr. Munif, one of the most well-

known contemporary Arab novelists, describes his childhood memories in Amman in the early 1940s, when it was little more than a large village.

According to the team, he evokes a distant world through richly detailed memories of his family, friends and daily life under the shadows of WWII and the looming crisis of the loss of Palestine.

At the debate, Mr. Munif said he considered the group's translations of his work more important than his previous individual translations because "the project creates an echo and a whole atmosphere for the work that is usually absent in individual translation attempts."

Four titles are nominated for translation each year, and apart from its literary quality, the chosen book must be ratified by at least three publishers and translators of three different languages to make it eligible for translation.

Among the titles listed for translation in 1998 are Aliya Mahmoud's "Habab Al Nathal" (Mothballs) and "Kitab Al Ibn" (The Book of the Son) by Mohammad Al Quaysi.

## what's going on

**FILM**  
\* "Orlando" at the British Council, Jabal Amman, at 6:00 p.m.

**AMMAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL**

**TUESDAY**  
\* Algerian play "Habil and Habib" and Egyptian play "The Daughters of Bernadeta Alba" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. respectively.

**WEDNESDAY**  
\* Jordanian play "Another Bullet at Bernadeta Alba's House" and Egyptian play "The Daughters of Bernadeta Alba" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. respectively.

**LECTURES**  
\* "Germany, the Near East and the Middle East" by Dr. Volker Perthes at the Centre for Strategic Studies, the University of Jordan at 12 noon.  
\* "La vida cultural de los moriscos valencianos" (in Spanish) by Robert Cuenca at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, on Wednesday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m.

**EXHIBITIONS**  
\* Works by Mohammad Al Shammari at Rawaq Al Balqa, Fuheis until April 7.  
\* Exhibition of electrical equipment, home appliances, clothing, perfume, sweets (marking the advent of 'Eid Al Adha) at the University of Jordan, until April 7.  
\* Book exhibition at the Bishop's School, Jabal Amman, First Circle, until April 2.  
\* Paintings on handmade paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra St. (Tel. 5699141/2), until April 25.  
\* "Colours of Life" at Books@Cafe (Tel. 837931/2), until March 31.

## Prince Ghazi returns from visits to British, German research centres

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi, cultural secretary of His Majesty King Hussein, has returned to Amman from visits to scientific research centres in Britain and Germany.

Accompanied by Princess Arij and the president of Balqa Applied Sciences University (BASU) in Salt, Khaled Toukan, Prince Ghazi visited an electronics plant in England and examined student training programmes.

The group also visited a college for science and technology and met its president to discuss bilateral cooperation in the fields of industry, water, chemical

and mechanical engineering and medical surgery. In Germany, the group toured similar centres and arrived at an agreement for cooperation between German research institutes and the university.

During the visit, it was announced that Germany will present BASU with highly advanced equipment worth \$8.2 million for use in research work in chemistry, physics and general sciences.

Balqa Applied Sciences University was established by a Royal Decree issued on Aug. 22, 1996.

King Hussein named Prince Ghazi as chairman of the university's Royal Com-

mission, a position he still holds, as well as its board of trustees. The university includes undergraduate facilities and community colleges linked to various government departments, as well as those run by the Jordan Armed Forces.

In his message to the government, King Hussein said the university should supervise the progress of community colleges in regulating their academic and vocational levels, help encourage qualified students to pursue a formal university education, and prepare trainees to pursue vocational and technical occupations.

## Promotional song on Kingdom's attractions to be launched today

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A promotional song by a Dutch singer on Jordan and its human, archaeological and natural wealth will be launched today during the "Tuesday Brunch Show" on Radio Jordan, Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Akel Biltaji announced yesterday.

"Love at First Sight," sung by Diana Ring and already available on compact disc and video, "will be used as a marketing tool, an unprecedented, artistic introduction to Jordan, where sounds and sights really go together, and words have reference to Jordan's most renowned sites," Mr. Biltaji told journalists.

Ms. Ring, who started as an opera singer but shifted to ballads and modern music early in her career, described the song as "the story of [her] relationship with this breathtaking country and its warm people."

According to Kamal Dafesh, the producer and author of the lyrics of



Cover of the CD single "Love at First Sight"

"Love at First Sight," the record will soon be launched in Holland. "After that the record will be launched in Germany," he added.

Both Ms. Ring and Mr. Dafesh presented the production to Jordan free of charge, with the cooperation of the Jordan Tourism Board (JTB), Mr. Biltaji said.

JTB Director Marwan Khouri said this modern song, with a soft touch of

Arabic and oriental tunes, "reflects exactly the image of Jordan we intend to project abroad: the image of Jordan as an ancient land, yet a modern Kingdom, peaceful, safe, and lively all together."

"It is an add-on to whatever promotional material we are using," he said.

"The song has a universal appeal and the video was created for the world at large to see," Mr. Biltaji added.

## Jordan, Israel conduct environmental drill at Aqaba

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Israel yesterday carried out a one-day naval exercise in the Gulf of Aqaba to test the efficiency of the two countries' naval crews in containing pollution in the ports of Aqaba and Eilat.

The director of the Prince Hamzeh Centre for Pollution Control, Mohammad Mahadine, said the exercises are also aimed at testing the preparedness of technical cadres in coping with marine pollution and ecology, the Jordan News

Agency, Petra, reported.

The operation, provided for in the 1994 peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, is the third of its kind since last August between the two countries. The treaty requires a certain level of cooperation in environmental affairs in the Gulf of Aqaba to preserve the gulf's unique marine life and development of joint rescue operation capabilities.

Israeli embassy spokesperson Roey Gilad was quoted by AP as saying that

the drill "is a civil task and not a military one."

Officials would not disclose how many naval craft were involved in the exercises, which took place along a 10-kilometre stretch of the Red Sea shore, AP said.

Aqaba Port Authorities and the Prince Hamzeh Centre earlier this month were called upon to contain a "minor" oil spill in the gulf.

A cargo ship, flying under the flag of

the Bahamas, was carrying livestock to Jordan when a human error in handling the ships valves allowed the release of three tonnes of fuel into the waters.

Officials said the majority of the spill — mostly light fuel — was contained the same day and the remainder was cleared away from the beaches a few days later.

The most devastating spill in Aqaba occurred three years ago, when a cargo ship released 55 tonnes of heavy fuel into the Gulf.



# Armenians choose president in final run-off

A black and white photograph of a protest. A group of people is holding a large banner that reads "ARE I A SCAR" and "FROM EACH" and "METRA". In the background, a vehicle with a "PENNZOIL" logo is visible.

Mr. Kocharyan, 43, a Karabakh native who served as its leader, rejects any peace that would leave the region subject to Azeri rule. A 1994 ceasefire left Karabakh Armenians tacitly backed by Yerevan, in control of a large swathe of Azeri terri-

mental human rights organisation, said Malaysia needed a consistent refugee policy.

the Isles of England,  
Scotland, Wales and  
Ireland.

Malaysian security forces forced the Indonesians onto ships at Port Klang, south of the capital Kuala Lumpur. They were to be sent back to Tanjung Balai in Sumatra.

"We deported 245 illegals

Some South Koreans with families in the North have in the past arranged meetings in a third country by paying co-

agreed to report back to its home government whereas before they had brushed it aside, saying it was not a topic

Bancairín was killed eight months after an editor of a Manila tabloid who specialised in exposing drug syndicates and police corruption was murdered inside a taxicab. His killing remains unsolved.

"We will allow the elderly with relatives in North Korea to visit them if they want. But they must have an invitation from Pyongyang and a letter guaranteeing their safety there," a Unification Ministry spokesman said.

"This is in line with our new government's policy towards North Korea."

"But there are many of them who can't even afford this. And so the government has decided to help pay some of the costs."

The two Red Cross societies last week agreed on a 50,000-tonne aid package for starving



## Prince Ranariddh returns to Cambodia vowing to work for unity

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Prince Norodom Ranariddh returned to a rapturous welcome amidst tight security in Phnom Penh Monday after nearly nine months in exile since being deposed as co-premier.

The prince appeared to hold out an olive branch to his bitter rival Hun Sen, the second prime minister, who ousted him in a fierce fight last July.

"I am available to see him anytime," the prince told reporters, referring to Hun Sen. He added he was willing to work with any politician to help progress towards elections scheduled for July.

However, diplomats cautioned that deep animosity and distrust remains between the two. "It looks like an olive branch," said one Asian diplomat. "But I have my doubts. There is bad blood between them."

Thousands of supporters and opponents of the prince staged rival rallies to mark his arrival from Bangkok.

"I am truly delighted and deeply moved to be back in our beloved Cambodia with our people after an absence of eight months," the prince said in a statement.

He was greeted by applause from supporters at the airport, but there was no red-carpet welcome for the son of King Norodom Sihanouk.

On the plane, he confided to reporters that he was "apprehensive" about the future. "When you are absent for nearly nine months you can't help having feelings of apprehension," he said.

"I was in exile because of a coup, my father was in exile because of a coup, but all the time we come back," he said referring to his father's exile — mainly in China — from 1970 to 1993.

There was tight security from police and army at Phnom Penh airport, and the prince and his top-level entourage of diplomats was whisked away without addressing waiting crowds.

The delegation included the U.N. secretary-general's special representative to Cambodia, Lakhan Mehorra, Brazil's Ambassador to Thailand, Aldo Carrilho and former U.S. congressman Stephen Solarz.

Thousands of people lined the road leading from the airport. And at least 1,000 more rapturous supporters waited outside his hotel, where he stood on a balcony blowing kisses.

The prince returned as part of a Japanese-brokered peace plan aimed at ensuring the July elections are free and fair, but reports that another of his supporters had been killed over the weekend heightened fears for his safety.

More than 40 royalist supporters have been killed since the prince was ousted and no one has yet been arrested for the murders.

Under the Japanese plan, the prince, who was convicted in absentia on charges of weapons smuggling and colluding with the Khmer Rouge, was granted a royal pardon by the king.

The international community had been pushing for the prince, who narrowly won U.N.-organised elections in 1993, to return and participate in the polls and said the vote would not be recognised if the prince was excluded.

In his statement, the prince thanked other nations for their work towards a peaceful solution of the Cambodia crisis. "From now on I shall work hard to gather, reunite and reinforce FUNCINPEC, which remains one of Cambodia's major political forces."

"I shall work in cooperation with the established Cambodian institutions, all political parties including (Hun Sen's) Cambodian People's Party."

The prince later met U.N. officials and diplomats, as well as the steering committee of his royalist FUNCINPEC party.

Tuesday, he is to attend a mass rally at FUNCINPEC headquarters, his only scheduled appearance outside the hotel during his stay which aides said was to last just four days.

However, the prince, told reporters there was no deadline for his departure. Just hours before his arrival about 2,000 people marched through Phnom Penh to protest the return, predicting it would herald a return to violence.

The prince acknowledged that his presence alone "is not sufficient for free and fair elections."

And the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch/Asia warned the climate of political violence was a threat to the elections. It called for action by the Cambodian government to end "the pattern of ongoing political violence and impunity for murderers and human rights violators."

The U.N. and human rights groups have complained the government has shown little or no serious interest in investigating the killings of the prince's supporters.

first, and Mr. Boulhal paid the 22,000 kronor bill. But by the time the final adjustment was to be made to the lower jaw, his restaurant had run into difficulty and he could not pay the bill.

"I was sitting in the chair when the dentist said he was going to take out the teeth in the lower jaw, because he didn't want any problems with the country," which subsidises dental treatment, he told the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet.

Mr. Boulhal has offered to follow a payment plan, but the clinic, supported by local authorities, has refused, arguing that "he won't be able to make the payments."

For now, Mr. Boulhal remains toothless. "For four months I've been eating pasta and soup," he said, complaining that his old false teeth do not fit the titanium screws left in his mouth.

The upper jaw was done



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) gestures during his meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in Moscow (Reuters photo)

## Yeltsin rules out 3rd term, refuses to crown Chernomyrdin heir

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin insisted Monday that he would not stand for president in elections due in 2000, but stopped short of endorsing sacked Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin as his heir apparent.

Mr. Yeltsin said Mr. Chernomyrdin's recent announcement that he would run for president was in keeping with a spirit of cooperation between the two, but stressed he would not name the former premier, dramatically dismissed along with his entire cabinet a week ago, as his designated successor.

"We don't have a tradition of successors," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists before talks with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan. "It is kings who are successors. We don't have them."

"Here, the people choose," Mr. Yeltsin said. "Under the constitution every citizen has the right to run" for president.

The Russian president said that although he would not confirm a successor, Mr. Chernomyrdin's declaration "did not fall outside the general practice of our politics and, moreover, is in keeping with the president's thoughts."

"When he said he took the decision (to stand), then something is not quite right," Mr. Yeltsin told journalists. "I took the decision, on sacking the cabinet, meaning at the same time that he would head up the presidential campaign for the 2000 elections."

"We need a strong leader there, and given that I am dropping out, we must strengthen the team," Mr. Yeltsin said.

Mr. Yeltsin, 67, stunned observers by sacking Mr. Chernomyrdin and his entire government last Monday, but his decision to appoint the ex-premier to head up the election campaign was riddled with ambiguities.

Some took the move to mean that Mr. Chernomyrdin, who served Mr. Yeltsin faithfully as premier for more than five years, would now be free to

launch his campaign to succeed the ailing Russian president.

Others said it was Mr. Yeltsin's typical way of reasserting himself as Russia's supreme political patriarch, and that the president wanted to sideline the increasingly influential Chernomyrdin to remain in a strong position for reelection.

Although the Russian president has repeatedly denied seeking a third term, his aides have not ruled it out, and the constitutional court is due to rule later in the year on whether Mr. Yeltsin can stand for president again, having already been elected during the Soviet era in 1991 and again in 1996.

"Yeltsin is organically incapable of ceding power," said political analyst Nikolai Petrov, commenting on the president's announcement Monday.

In Mr. Chernomyrdin's place, Mr. Yeltsin Friday named young reformer Sergei Kiriyenko as his candidate for prime minister, risking a fresh showdown with the state Duma lower house of parliament, which is packed with anti-reform Communists and allied left groups.

But Monday, Mr. Yeltsin said he was sure the Duma would confirm the former energy minister, 35, as premier when it votes on the nomination Friday.

Mr. Yeltsin's confidence contrasted sharply with a negative assessment of Mr. Kiriyenko's credentials offered Sunday evening by Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov, whose party and assorted allies control 226 seats in the 450-seat lower house.

"We cannot approve just anyone for the second most important position in the state," Mr. Zyuganov said.

The Duma, which has repeatedly locked horns with Mr. Yeltsin since its institution in December 1993, must return its verdict Friday.

Markets were generally unmoved by Mr. Yeltsin's guessing game Monday, with stocks flat amid very

calm trading, according to one Moscow broker.

Analysts believe Mr. Chernomyrdin's presidential bid could secure strong business backing, as the stolid ex-premier is generally considered a safe pair of hands, but his grey technocratic image and lack of rhetorical powers are unlikely to seduce the voters.

Current opinion polls give the influential former gas corporation chief only about two or three per cent support, and his power base is likely to dwindle now that he is out of office, observers say.

In a development related to last week's government shake-up, Mr. Yeltsin also appointed an interim successor to sacked Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov Monday, naming outgoing justice minister and longtime aide Sergei Stepashin to the post.

## Chancellor Kohl shaking up election team

BERLIN (AFP) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl is shaking up his campaign team as he tries to overcome a disastrous start in the long run-up to September's general elections, a newspaper report said Monday.

Friedrich Bohl, who oversees the chancellor's office, is to take over coordination of the campaign for Mr. Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper said.

The idea is for better coordination between the party, the chancellor and the CDU group in parliament. Mr. Kohl, who has been chancellor since 1982, is running low in polls against Gerhard Schröder, candidate of the main opposition party the Social Democrats (SPD).

The chancellor has previously denied any role in the campaign and officials contacted there last week about the elections referred one reporter back to the party CDU party headquarters, run by CDU general secretary Peter Hintze.

The weekly magazine Der Spiegel reported Monday that "the strategy for the national campaign will be largely decided in the chancellery."

Mr. Hintze was responsible for the recent tactic of trying to link Mr. Schröder and the SPD to radical proposals by the other main leftist party, the Greens, to triple the tax on gasoline.

The move fell flat as Schröder dismissed the Greens proposal as "non-sense."

Mr. Hintze is to remain at his post while Mr. Bohl will have no official functions in relation to the campaign machine, the Berliner Morgenpost said.

In a German radio interview Monday, Mr. Hintze dismissed the report of a campaign shakeup as "non-sense."

Speaking to Deutschlandfunk, Mr. Hintze said his campaign against the gas tax increase had been "a big success" as it

had increased tension between the SPD and the Greens, who seek to rule in a coalition after the September elections.

But a close advisory to Mr. Kohl, Dominican priest Basilius Streithofen, said in an interview in the Koelnische Rundschau newspaper: "It is clear that (SPD campaign director) Franz Muntefering is running a better campaign than Hintze."

But he said it would not be wise to replace Mr. Hintze at this point as head of the campaign.

Kurt Biedenkopf, governor of the state of Saxony in Eastern Germany and an adversary of Mr. Kohl within the CDU, said in another interview that the campaign was "too flat." He told the mass circulation daily Bild that in addition the CDU has for years advocated increasing gas taxes.

Environment Minister Angela Merkel, who is from the CDU, said recently she was not against higher gasoline taxes.

Speaking to Deutschlandfunk, Mr. Hintze said his campaign against the gas tax increase had been "a big success" as it

## Hundreds of Indonesian students stone police

JAKARTA (AFP) — Hundreds of university students in central Java Monday stoned police and troops blocking their way out of the campus, reports and university employees said.

About 50 police and soldiers prevented 300 students at the State Islamic Institute in Yogyakarta from staging a rally demanding economic and political reforms in the street, witnesses said.

Student protests demanding reforms to overcome the economic crisis have taken place in several cities since the end of February.

Minister of Youth and Sport Agung Laksono said earlier Monday that President Suharto was agreeable in principle to holding a dialogue with students.

"In principle he said that it is possible, a dialogue between university students and the president is possible," Mr. Laksono told reporters after meeting the president.

Armed Forces Commander

Wiranto last week said students should hold dialogues with the military, their teachers and officials rather than stage rallies.

Only students deemed "capable of delivering, explaining and conveying economic problems" would be selected to attend the dialogue with the president, Mr. Laksono said.

Rallies on campus grounds have mostly tolerated by the authorities. Several clashes have occurred when demonstrators attempted to take their protest to the streets.

## Swedish dentist seizes teeth in payment dispute

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — A restaurant owner has been forced to slurp pasta and soup for four months because his dentist removed his teeth after learning he could not pay his bill, according to press reports Monday.

Ridha Boulhal was left with only titanium screws in his lower jaw when his dentist took his dental implants back.

The case is being seen as the latest, and most dramatic, example of heavy cutbacks in Sweden's public dental and health insurance.

"If you can't pay, then you can't have teeth," said Ola Saaw, the director of the clinic where Mr. Boulhal's dental implants have been requisitioned.

Mr. Boulhal, who owns a small restaurant, knew his implants would cost 40,000 kronor (\$5,000) when he began the process.

first, and Mr. Boulhal paid the 22,000 kronor bill. But by the time the final adjustment was to be made to the lower jaw, his restaurant had run into difficulty and he could not pay the bill.

"I was sitting in the chair when the dentist said he was going to take out the teeth in the lower jaw, because he didn't want any problems with the country," which subsidises dental treatment, he told the Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet.

Mr. Boulhal has offered to follow a payment plan, but the clinic, supported by local authorities, has refused, arguing that "he won't be able to make the payments."

For now, Mr. Boulhal remains toothless. "For four months I've been eating pasta and soup," he said, complaining that his old false teeth do not fit the titanium screws left in his mouth.

The upper jaw was done

## Guangdong man freed from cage, institutionalised

BEIJING (AFP) — A Chinese peasant who had been held without charge in a small cage for five years has been released and institutionalised for insanity, a Yangcheng Evening News report seen here Monday said.

Officials from Zhanjiang city in southern Guangdong province removed Deng Qihu, 43, from his cramped outdoor cage at the Public Security Bureau early Sunday, the newspaper said in its Sunday edition.

He was injected with sedatives and immediately admitted to the city's Third People's Hospital, it said.

Saturday, the daily drew attention to the man's 10-year detention without charge with a front-page article asking, "How long should he be caged?"

showed the man, wearing only a loincloth, sitting in the cramped outdoor cage.

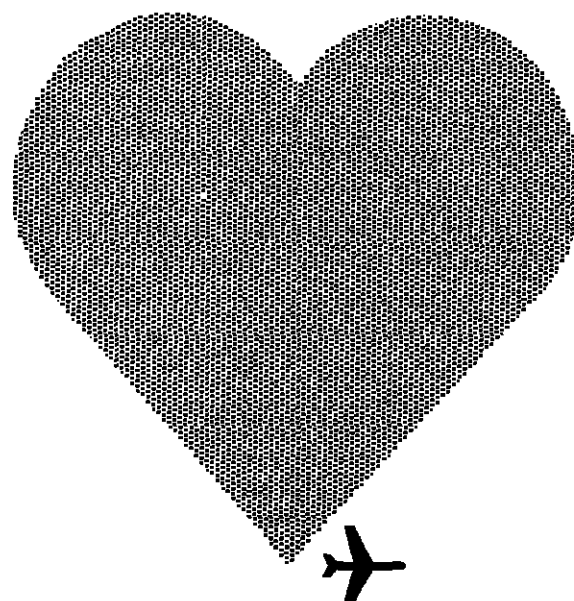
Sunday's report revealed that the city's judicial psychiatry institute and mental health hospital jointly determined in 1989 that Mr. Deng suffered from chronic schizophrenia.

The two bodies recommended enforced custody for the people's safety at the time because of repeated assaults committed by the man, it said.

Instead of being placed in a secure hospital environment, he was put in police custody. The Public Security Bureau from 1992 forward kept him in the cage, which is not tall enough to stand in.

Mr. Deng reportedly had attacked a county government official with a knife in 1988.

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WINNING THE HEARTS OF THE WORLD



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## Netanyahu's aides shoot down reports

(Continued from page 1)

killed in the blast. Palestinian police said Monday they have not identified the body, and have not established a connection to one of the activist groups that have carried out attacks on Israel in the past.

Monday's Palestinian marches and protests were ostensibly held to mark Land Day, an annual commemoration of a 1976 protest against land confiscation in which six Israeli Arabs were killed by Israeli troops.

However, some of the anger was aimed at the United States. "Death to America," chanted hundreds of high school students in Bethlehem as they marched toward an Israeli enclave, Rachel's Tomb, on the outskirts of town.

Near the enclave, dozens of Palestinian teen-agers threw stones at Israeli soldiers who responded

with tear gas and rubber-coated bullets, injuring several people, including a Palestinian policeman.

In Al Bireh, Palestinian riot police clubbed dozens of Palestinian protesters to keep them away from Israeli lines. Israeli soldiers fired rubber-coated bullets from a nearby hilltop. "We are out here today because it's Land Day, and we need to remind the Palestinian Authority that the road to liberation is still a long one," said stone-thrower Odeh Hussein, 18.

Throughout the West Bank, Palestinians observed a partial commercial strike, and in some towns, traffic stopped for five minutes in observance of Land Day. In the West Bank town of Nablus, about 4,000 Palestinian joined a Land Day march, carrying banners reading "No peace with settlements." Some burned Israeli and U.S. flags.

## Deputies differ on performance

(Continued from page 1)

Festival to take place in Jordan during Eid Al Fitr. They claimed that parts of the televised show were immoral and violated Muslim beliefs. A month later, Mr. Mutawi lost his portfolio in a limited government reshuffle.

In late February, 13 deputies signed a petition calling for the impeachment of Interior Minister Matthee Rasheed for his handling of pro-Iraqi protests in Ma'an on Feb. 20 that left one person dead and over 23 injured.

A lengthy and heated speech given by Deputy Ahmad Abbadi during a budget debate came as a bombshell.

In a speech broadcast live on Jordan Television, Dr. Abbadi, who cast a vote of confidence in the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, lashed out at the government and accused past and present officials of nepotism, favoritism and corruption.

The former police officer also called on the government to stop granting citizenship to "the bedouins and citizens of neighbouring Arab countries" — an implicit reference to Palestinians who form a large percentage of the Kingdom's 4.5 million population.

Dr. Abbadi's speech generated a nation-wide barrage of criticism.

On the street, many Jordanians said they were shocked by parts of the speech that questioned citizenship rights, attacked ministers and the intelligence department as well as other institutions.

The government, which initially threatened to sue the lawmaker for allegedly endangering national unity and slandering the judicial system, later put the file on the backburner, deputies said.

The Islamist bloc, which in past houses was a key and active power broker, was not the only missing element in this Parliament.

Seventeen women can-

didates, including Toujan Faisal, Jordan's first and only woman member of Parliament, were routed in the ballot that returned an all-male parliament.

"Ms. Faisal's absence left a mark in this Parliament," Dr. Ammarin said, referring to Ms. Faisal's flamboyant debates and her defence of human rights issues.

Ms. Faisal, who won in 1993, lost to former Minister of Information Secretary General Nayef Mouta in the elections, which she claimed were rigged by the government.

The House granted Dr. Majali's government a vote of confidence on Dec. 15 but only after extracting pledges that his team will help improve the people's living standards, fight poverty and unemployment and preserve public freedoms.

Though the so-called opposition of 15 deputies voted against Dr. Majali's 24-member team, which took office in March 1997 while Parliament was in recess, an unexpected twelve abstained.

But on many occasions, the opposition surprised many by shifting stances.

Over 60 deputies are demanding an extraordinary session in June to continue debate on pending draft laws including the new elections law.

Though many believe that the King will issue a Royal Decree endorsing their request, the government, engulfed in a war-of-words with the opposition, will make sure the agenda does not include any controversial draft laws such as amendments to the 1993 press and publications law.

Unlike normal House sessions, agendas of extraordinary sessions are fixed by decree.

# Feminist scholarship in studies in and about the Middle East

*Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives*  
Edited by Deniz Kandiyoti  
New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996, 177 pages

FEMINIST-INSPIRED scholarship has passed through several stages since the emergence of women's studies in the late 60s. In the first round, efforts focused on combatting male bias and "breaking the silence" by adding the women's perspective which had been left out of standard history and social science writing. Feminist scholars began to question and redefine analytic categories such as women's work and the family.

In the second phase, efforts were made to find the causes of women's subordination. The idea that modernisation would automatically lead to women's emancipation was subject to heavy criticism. In the 80s, the third phase, the very frameworks of analysis were challenged and altered. Cross-cultural studies and the inclusion of Third World issues served to enrich debates. A shift occurred whereby it was not enough just to deal with women's issues. A new term, gender, emerged for analysing not only women's situation but society as a whole.

Whereas the word sex denotes biological differences between men and women, gender refers to social phenomena which exhibit the male/female distinction. The concept of gender began to be used to explore male/female differences in the context of power relations as reflected in culture and politics.

Gendering the Middle East explores how these advances in feminist scholarship have been reflected in studies in and about the Middle East. The book's editor, Deniz Kandiyoti, asks how gender analysis has modified the ways of seeing and thinking about culture, society, politics and literature. Her introduction is followed by articles by seven other feminist scholars writing on subjects which range from the need for gender analysis to understand the Islamic Republic in Iran, to researching gender in a Palestinian refugee camp. While the book does not pretend to be comprehensive in terms of subject matter or geography, it presents a stimulating selection of some of the current "hot" issues in feminist research.

example, among families with small holdings, a woman who has brothers usually refrains from claiming her inheritance in order to enhance the brothers' and her own status, and accentuate their obligation to provide for her. Thus, claiming property rights does not necessarily denote power, but may rather signify loss of standing in the community.

"Modernisation" has not lessened women's need to rely on male relatives. On the contrary: "From the 1950s onwards, with the rapid increase in migrant male wage-labour and the marginalisation of agriculture, men's responsibilities as providers and women's dependence as consumers has been reinforced" (p. 83).

Palestine at mid-century is the subject of an article by Sheila Hannah Katz, who argues that in both Jewish and Arab society,

"divisions between women on the lines of class and race..." (p. 98). On the other hand, Katz contends that using "gender as a tool of analysis makes it possible to write an integrative history of Palestine where there have (previously) been at least two antagonistic narratives" (p. 101).

In a highly original article, Simona Sharoni analyses the Oslo accord from a feminist perspective. She muses that Hanan Ashrawi's "popularity and success in presenting the Palestinian case to the international community may have been the major factor that prompted the appointment of women as spokespersons for the Syrian and Israeli delegations." However, she cautions that such changes may only indicate that women are being used "to sell international politics" (p. 110). In contrast, two Norwegian women who facilitated the Oslo accords have remained largely unknown: Marianne Heiberg, author of FAFO's study of living conditions in the occupied territories, is married to Norway's foreign minister. Her contacts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip helped him to meet key people on the Palestinian and Israeli sides. The other woman is Mona Yoll, top advisor to the Foreign Ministry and married to FAFO's director. "The active roles these two prominent women played in the pre-negotiation stage remain the best-kept secrets in the history of the back-stage negotiations that led to the Accord" (p. 111). Sharoni also dissects

the militarised speech of Rabin at the Washington signing ceremony and contrasts his outlook with that of both Palestinians and Israelis who aspired to a just peace.

Turning to the field of literature, Hoda El Sadda pays tribute to the Egyptian novelist, Salwa Bakr, who "transcends the limits of (man vs. woman) binary thought in her search for alternative structures, images and relations that will ultimately prove to be far more liberating" and

more fulfilling for women and men." Bakr's fiction defies classification, because she refuses to depict "the battle of the sexes," and instead gives a voice to underprivileged women, undermining the traditional roles of women and emphasising their great potential" (p. 134). She also transcends the great divide between classical and spoken Arabic, producing a new innovative style by combining the two.

Sally Bland

## BOOK REVIEW

## Storytelling, poetry and technology through the art of Al Young

By Omar Karmi  
Special to the Jordan Times

WHEN MR. Adolph Sax invented the saxophone, he gave specific instructions that his instrument should never be used by the "Negroid" people, because they lacked the fine sensibility to utilise such an instrument properly. Ironic how it was a black jazz musician, Coleman Hawkins, who properly brought the sax forward as a solo instrument, as we think of it today. Ironic how, when we think of sax-players today, we think of African American jazz-players.

These were just some of the ironies that African American novelist, poet and screenwriter Al Young read, sang and improvised his way through in his presentation, "Storytelling, Poetry and Technology," at the American Center at the U.S. embassy last week.

Born in Mississippi in 1939, Mr. Young began to publish poems, stories and articles in local newspapers while still in his teens. In 1969 he completed his Bachelor of Arts in Spanish at the University of California. His first book, "Dancing," a collection of poems, was published that same year, and the following year his first novel "Snakes" was released. A hugely prolific career followed, which, apart from poems and novels, included journalism — for Rolling Stone magazine, the New York Times and others — and screen writing (for Sydney Poitier, Bill Cosby and Richard Pryor).

Jordan was the last stop for Mr. Young on a tour of the Middle East which included Egypt, Israel and Palestine. Organised by the United States Information Service (USIS), the tour, he said, aims to promote "the fact that we have more in common than there are differences. Countries that engage in cultural exchange are always far richer than those that don't."

Mr. Young's main concern is the impact of modern technology on literature, art and music which, he contends, are our most important tools of communication.

The irony is, Mr. Young said in an interview with the Jordan Times, that while information worldwide has become easier than ever before to access, the quality of that information seems to have dipped, and instead of creating a wider view, has in fact served to reinforce stereotypes. He draws on his experience as an African American: "African American males are depicted on our television screens as being criminals, thugs, rapists and drug-dealers. So much so, that when people come to the U.S. and see a black man they get scared. The truth is that most crime in America is committed

by white people, and that crack is mainly consumed by whites."

But this perpetuation of African American stereotypes is just one example of how mass-media has come to affect us. It is rarely, for example, emphasised in the media how, at the heart of modern Western culture lies the African American tradition. Black spirituals and the street version of this music, the Blues, gave rise to jazz, which in turn, after being twisted and turned into a form of art rather than just entertainment by the likes of Coleman Hawkins, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Charlie Parker, inspired the beat generation of white writers and poets such as Jack Kerouac and William Burroughs (not to forget, although they often are, the black poets and writers: Leroy Jones, Ted Joans and Bob Kaufman). These eventually gave rise to the Beatles, the hippie movement, anti-war demonstrations, and ultimately current popular dance music and rap.

On a more global scale, and even more sinister, is what Noam Chomsky, the famous American linguist and philosopher, calls the "manufacture of consent": the influence of mass-media over political thought and opinion.

"People, in the U.S., get their opinions, pro or con or indifferent on any issue from TV. I'm a hawk when it comes to Iraq — they watch some show. Or 'Well, actually we really hurt a lot of people, and there so many who are ill or dying that as a humanitarian you just can't do this' — well, they probably got that from TV. It worries me to know that all the TV networks, radio stations and publishing houses in the United States are owned by five huge Transnational corporations."

There are positive sides to modern information technology, though. Mr. Young relates a story of a 17-year-old, who after hearing about the endangerment of dolphins by tuna fishing, got on the Internet, and Star-Kist, a major tuna fish manufacturer in the U.S. was bombarded with 75,000 letters from all over the world, which eventually resulted in a change in the fishing policies.

"They try to control it. But every time they do, there is some thirteen-year-old kid somewhere who goes 'wait a minute, we could do this...' I love it."

Ultimately, literature, music and art fulfil a need that cannot be replaced by technology. It is the sum of human experience, imagination and creation, not just direct communication, and transmission of information which technology has mainly improved upon.

DENIZ KANDIYOTI

## Gendering the Middle East

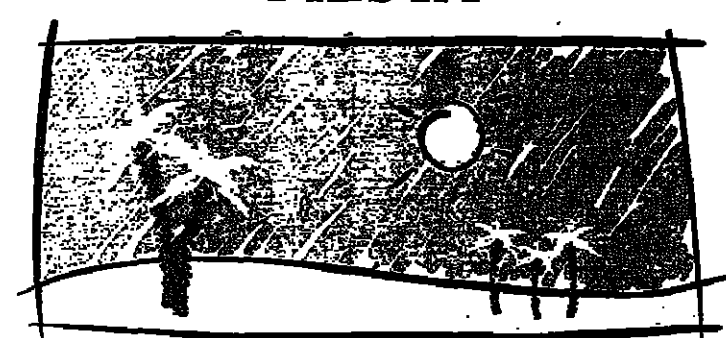
Emerging Perspectives

the militarised speech of Rabin at the Washington signing ceremony and contrasts his outlook with that of both Palestinians and Israelis who aspired to a just peace.

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## A MEDITERRANEAN FIESTA



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## Further oil price fall highly damaging, UAE says

VIENNA (AFP) — A further fall in oil prices would be highly damaging not only to oil producers but to the world economy in general, the United Arab Emirates warned Monday as OPEC oil ministers began an extraordinary meeting here to discuss ways to stabilise prices.

The sharp falls in oil prices since late November, when OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) decided to increase output by 10 per cent, are "of great concern to OPEC," UAE Petroleum Minister Obaid Bin Sait Al Nasser, chairing the meeting, said.

Unless the price falls are "quickly checked, they will become highly damaging not only to our member countries and other oil producers, but also — and inevitably — to the world economy at large," he said.

The meeting is officially to formalise pledges by all 11 OPEC members except Iraq, to cut production as part of an agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC countries announced by Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Mexico eight days ago.

Monday's meeting as an observer, with a delegation headed by Ricardo Samaniego, undersecretary in the energy ministry.

There has been some question whether the production cuts will be based on actual production or on quota levels.

This could be seen as favouring quota-busters to the detriment of countries such as Iran, Libya and Indonesia, which are already producing below quota but would still have to cut output.

Mr. Al Nasser made it clear, however, that the basis for discussion was a cut in actual output, not quota levels.

"The purpose of our extraordinary meeting today is to solidify the understanding recently reached to reduce the excess oil in the market through a voluntary cut from current production," he said.

Nigerian Oil Minister Dan Etete also suggested that the meeting would not go beyond this single issue, saying shortly before the opening that the meeting would be "very short" but "decisive."

Asked if he felt the agreement by 15 OPEC and non-

OPEC oil producers to cut output by 1.5 million barrels a day will be enough to boost prices, he said: "I think the market will respond favourably."

Mr. Al Nasser welcomed what he described as a "new era of cooperation in the relations between OPEC and non-OPEC oil producers" demonstrated by the agreement.

He said he was "confident that once our understanding has been confirmed and is seen to be applied, the market will continue to respond positively."

Oil prices recovered somewhat after the announcement eight days ago that Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and non-OPEC member Mexico had agreed on the need to cut output.

But after recovering from below \$12 a barrel to more than \$15 last week as other countries followed the Saudi, Venezuelan and Mexican lead, oil prices levelled off somewhat and then dropped Monday afternoon to \$14.85 a barrel for May delivery, against \$15.47 at mid-day.

That compares with a price of nearly \$19 a barrel before the Jakarta meeting. Some market analysts fear

that the output reduction agreement will not hold, noting that while OPEC agreed an output ceiling of 27.5 million barrels a day in Jakarta, output has been running at around 28.8 million according to experts.

It is also not clear whether a 1.5 million barrel a day cut will be enough to reduce saturated stockpiles in industrial countries following a mild northern hemisphere winter and reduced Asian demand due to the region's economic crisis.

Average demand for OPEC oil this year is estimated by the International Energy Agency (IEA) at little more than 26 million barrels a day, nearly three million barrels less than current output.

The IEA in early March estimated average world demand for oil this year at 75.1 million barrels a day, and February output at 76.75 million barrels. On the basis of these figures a 1.5 million barrel cut in output would barely be enough to bring supply into line with demand.

The OPEC members are Algeria, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and

Venezuela.

According to experts, the sharp decline in oil prices since December has underscored OPEC's flawed policy of expanding its market share at the expense of revenue.

The 11-nation OPEC again miscalculated when it increased its official output ceiling by nearly 10 per cent for the first half of 1998, disregarding several factors, they said.

"The increase in the ceiling was a mistake because there was a large surplus in the market and consumption was slowing down because of the Asian economic crisis and other market and seasonal factors," said Mohamad Al Asumi, chief economist at the government-controlled Emirates Industrial Bank.

"The logic of defending its market share is also wrong ... OPEC should target high revenues rather than high production. The latest collapse in oil prices underscored this problem," he told AFP.

"The cuts do not mean that Gulf states are giving up a strategy to defend their market share," said Ihsan Abu Huleika, a prominent Saudi economist.

"But I believe it is a step in the right direction. Safeguarding their market share is pointless if it is at the expense of their income," he added.

With the exception of Iran which advocates higher prices, Saudi Arabia and its Arab Gulf partners have long pressed for a bigger market share given their immense crude reserves and surplus output capacities.

Saudi Arabia's position was a reversal of its policy during the 1980s, when it played the role of a residual producer within OPEC to stabilise prices.

"Gulf countries and other producers inside OPEC and outside it should learn a lesson from the latest price crisis and think of how to defend their income rather than their market share," Mr. Asumi said.

"The coming weeks will show whether they will adopt this formula or not. Building their strategy on production will again push down prices ... As you see, they are now practically going back to the previous ceiling," he added.

## Israeli unemployment rises as economic growth slows

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Unemployment in Israel rose to 8.2 per cent of the workforce in January in another sign the economy is slowing, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported Monday.

In addition, inflation slowed during the first two months of the year to an annual rate of two per cent, in contrast to a rate of

between four to five per cent in December and November and six per cent between August and October.

Inflation in 1997 hit a 30-year low of seven per cent largely due to high interest rates maintained by the Bank of Israel.

Business leaders have criticised the tight monetary and fiscal policies of the right-wing government, insisting

it is at fault for the unemployment rate, the highest in three years.

Economic growth fell to two per cent in 1997, half of the rate for 1996, and projections for 1998 predict growth between 1.0 and 1.5 per cent.

In another development, the Jerusalem Post recently quoted a senior Treasury official as saying Israel's

economy will grow no more than two per cent in 1998, well below the Treasury's forecast and only slightly better than 1997's 1.8 per cent rise.

Unemployment will reach 8.7 per cent compared with 7.7 per cent in 1997, the official said.

Tzippi Galyam, head of the finance ministry's economic research and state

revenue administration, said there was a need to rethink the ministry's forecasts given recent developments.

Treasury officials believe the Asian crisis could cut into exports and lower economic growth from an original forecast of 3.0 to 3.5 per cent.

Recent concerns about Iraq may have deterred investments and cost the country in additional defence spending. Furthermore, tourism is undergoing a prolonged slowdown.

The prime minister's office has said it was trying to organise a gathering of public and private sector leaders and workers in a bid to formulate a programme for lowering unemployment and restoring growth to the four-five per cent level of recent years.

Meanwhile, Israeli direct investment overseas fell nearly 11 per cent last year to \$887 million from \$993 million in 1996, the Bank of Israel has said.

The central bank said most of the new investment was by industrial companies, chiefly in the electronics sector, investing in foreign subsidiaries either formed or acquired in recent years.

Net direct investment overseas also fell but by a smaller four per cent to \$678 million from \$710 million. Total outstanding investment reached \$4.78 billion at the end of 1997, equal to 15 per cent of the combined equity of companies that have invested abroad.

Although overseas investment by Israeli companies fell last year it was much higher than in 1994 and 1995, when the rate was about \$650 million annually, the Bank of Israel noted.

Over the last four years, total outgoing net direct investment reached \$3.19 billion.

Some \$420 million of total direct investment last year was in North America, down from \$467 million in 1996, the Central Bank said. Direct investment in western Europe fell more sharply to \$201 million from \$360 million in 1996.

Asia accounted for just \$5 million of the total, down from \$19 million in 1996, the Central Bank said, while investment in eastern Europe rose to \$44 million from \$41 million.



A scent inspired by love and life

In Love Again, the latest scent product from Yves Saint Laurent

The Medical Equipment Office represented by Mr. Taher Mohammad Al Hudhud, the sole agent for Yves Saint Laurent, organised a training course marking the introduction of the new scent and cosmetics In Love Again. A ceremony for opening the training course was held at the Meridien Hotel and attended by a large audience of guests and trainees.

The ceremony was supervised by the French cosmetics expert Marielle Colin who presented a detailed briefing on the In Love Again scent and cosmetics.

## Foreign investment in Egypt doubled in last 5 years

CAIRO (AFP) — Foreign investment in Egypt doubled in the past five years to 11 billion Egyptian pounds (\$3.2 billion) in 1997, Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Al Ganzouri has said.

Mr. Ganzouri, speaking here to a conference of businessmen of Egyptian origin living abroad, said foreign investment in Egypt had been 5.3 billion Egyptian pounds (\$1.5 billion) in 1993. He said he expected foreign investment to reach 20 billion Egyptian pounds (\$5.8 billion) by the end of the year.

Ibrahim Fawzi, the gov-

ernment official responsible for investments, said in December that both foreign and Egyptian investments more than tripled last year compared to 1996.

"The amount of capital for investment projects during the first 11 months of 1997 reached 16 billion Egyptian pounds (\$4.7 billion) compared to 5.7 billion pounds (\$1.6 billion) for all of 1996," he said.

Egypt adopted in May 1997 a new law providing guarantees, temporary tax exemptions, and other incentives for foreign investors.

### THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

**ACROSS**

- Raccochet
- Go by
- In the same place
- Journalist — Rogers St. Johns
- Seed coat
- Only just
- Burns, as cataracts
- Narrative
- Map of lots
- Hopless
- Surf sound
- Collection of primitive poetry
- Observer
- Purple red
- Garden plots
- Particle
- Expensive
- Hollywood figure?
- Shoot from hiding
- Lemon or orange ending
- Jungle vine
- Score
- Crow calls
- Air out
- Monumental entrance
- Hans Christian Andersen's birthplace
- Package
- Jai
- District
- Shockproof
- Honey
- Structure
- Ephron or Lofts
- Of a people: pref.
- Writer Zola
- Wedding vows
- Kidney enzyme
- Calendar info
- Penny
- Jags

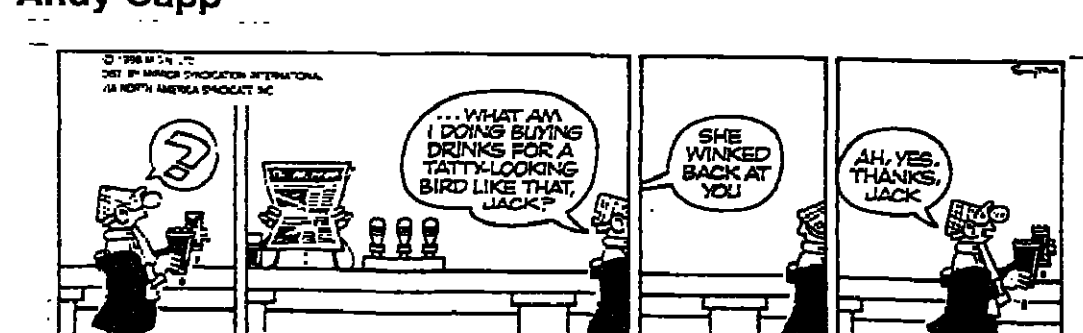
**DOWN**

- Colombian metropolis
- Man with an apple
- Ans. to a ques.
- Imitation butter
- Large groups
- Backyard courtyard
- Semantic people
- Window ledge
- Arm cover
- Remarkable
- Under
- Funous
- Dissuade
- Stepped on it
- Sacred image
- Play's players
- Mediterranean peak
- Irritate
- Impossible to appease
- Concoct
- Per unit
- "Jane"
- Napoleon novel
- Basse-
- Normandie city
- Blyth and Richards
- Cost per unit
- "Jane"
- Fly high, as an eagle
- Outpatient facility
- Shunt
- Walked to and fro
- Lure of the kitchen
- Transmit payment
- Edge of a green
- Minimum
- A la
- Roman way
- Cry of distress
- Module
- Your brothers
- To your father

### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n'Jeff



## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You want to buy tools and equipment, and possibly some books to teach you how to use them. You want to push forward as fast as possible, but it's almost as if you've still got the emergency brake on. Relax. It's just part of the phase you're in. It's probably designed to teach you patience.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) The pressure's on. Instead of trying to resist, learn how to drive this vehicle in the right direction. You've got up a head of steam, so use it to your advantage. There's no point in trying to pull the emergency brake. Pay attention to where you're going and have a great time.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You're going to be more successful if you let some of your teammates carry the ball for a while. Some of them can move more quickly than you. Your partner will be in a better position to make the shot later on this evening. Provide the support and let the other person do what's necessary.

**CANCER:** (June 22 to July 21) The opportunities are appearing and disappearing so quickly it's hard to tell which one to take. Just watch, and eventually a pattern should emerge. Stay calm. That will give you the advantage. Let your conscience be your guide and you'll be fine.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Don't let a burdensome individual weigh you down this morning. Your friends will come up with a creative solution to a problem this afternoon. Organise your team now, so you won't have to worry about it later. Remember, you'll be able to do more if you delegate some chores to others.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Make a decision you've been thinking about this morning. There will be changes soon, which will continue for the next two days. You can shift things around your advantage, but first you have to know what this is. Otherwise, certain folks will shift things around to your disadvantage.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) If you and your mate have planned ahead, you could be starting your vacation right now. If not, start planning. Get some travel brochures on your lunch hour. If you launch into the project right now, it'll be easier than if you wait. Don't hesitate a moment longer.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You're a very determined person. If you've got a determined partner working with you, you can't lose. It looks that's the situation this morning. A little wheeling and dealing may be required, but that's OK. That's your area of expertise. The money you need should become available this afternoon.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) It's time to take on a partner — either romantic or business. It could even be somebody that you're hiring to work for you, like an attorney or accountant. Don't strain your brain trying to do something when someone else can do it better.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) A job you've been avoiding will demand your full attention by the middle of the day. Better give it some thought. You can get into almost as much trouble for things you forgot to do as for things you did wrong. Start by paying a debt you owe a co-worker.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Your hidden poetic streak may come out today. Be expressive, but don't take your sweetheart to a party tonight and then spend the evening talking to somebody else, even if it's for business reasons. The impact on your private life would be terrible.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Even if you and your roommates are getting along well, there are issues to be discussed and people's nerves may be on edge. Do what you can to keep things mellow. Cut out the stimulants from your diet. On days like this one, the more serenity you can generate, the better.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.

### THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I'm serious about improving my diet. Does a Bloody Mary count as one serving of vegetables or two?"

### JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

**NESOO**

**DIEFT**

**THROBE**

**NOXEGY**

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: PLAID HITCH GENDER BOUNCE  
Answer: What the comic gave the header — A "PUNCH" LINE



## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Trial shipment of vegetables and fruits to be dispatched to Hungary next month

**\*\* THE AGRICULTURAL Marketing Organisation (AMO) will dispatch a trial shipment of fruits and vegetables to the Hungarian market between April 8-13 to explore the market and promote Jordanian products there. Such a shipment falls within the AMO plan to send several trial shipments to existing as well as promising markets.**

By such trials, the AMO aims at studying the marketing and handling of the Jordanian products and identifying the needs of outside markets in terms of preferred types and specifications as well as packaging requirements. In addition, the aim is to open communication channels between Jordanian exporters and importers at those markets and to evaluate the potential of the produce to be transported for long distances and the means of transportation as well (Al Ra'i).

### National Portfolio Securities Company resorts to reserves to return to profitability

**\*\* THE NATIONAL Portfolio Securities Company emerged from the red last year by amortising the JD1.3 million loss posted in 1996 from the JD4.62 million reserve balance related to premiums collected from issuing shares. Furthermore, the profit also resulted from generating JD849,500 of earnings, JD783,400 of which were the profit of the securities portfolio.**

Board Chairman and General Manager Mohammad Bilbeisi described the JD783,400 profit as "distinguished" especially when taking into consideration that the prices at the stock exchange dropped by 13.4 per cent according to the unweighted general price index calculated by the Amman Financial Market (AFM).

Mr. Bilbeisi indicated in the annual report that the company used new investment tools for the first time in 1997. He explained that that was through the JD23 million Global Depository Receipts issued by the Arab Potash Company and floated in the London market and through the \$100 million bonds issued by the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company in Euro-

pean markets. According to the report, a total of JD335 million worth of shares/bonds were issued in the primary market last year compared to only JD188 million in 1996.

Mr. Bilbeisi detailed the investments of the portfolio by pointing out that 44 per cent were in the financial sector, 33 per cent in the industrial sector, 18 per cent in the services sector and five per cent in the insurance sector. He revealed that the portfolio amounted to JD8.4 million worth of securities and that the transactions for the benefit of the portfolio amounted to JD20.77 million. The trading volume on behalf of clients was around JD13 million.

The assets of the company at the end of 1997 totalled JD9.32 million and the net shareholders' equity stood at JD7.74 million of which JD5 million represented the capital and JD4.63 million the balance of the reserve related to the premiums collected from issuing shares (Al Arab Al Yawm + Al Ra'i).

## Lebanon sees strong demand for Eurobond

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon is seeing stronger than expected demand for \$800 million in Eurobond sales and Arab investors are eyeing Beirut's debt, a senior central bank official has said.

"We are seeing higher demand than we anticipated," Nasser Saidi, first vice governor of the central bank, told Reuters.

Lebanon will launch \$2 bonds next week to total \$800 million. Both issues will be underwritten by Paribas.

The \$500 million tranche will have a three-year maturity and be priced to yield 240-250 basis points over U.S. treasuries.

The \$300 million tranche will have a five-year maturity and be priced to yield 280-290 basis points over five-year U.S. treasuries.

Lebanon held an investor presentation on the Eurobonds in London and is due to hold one in the Gulf Arab state of Bahrain.

Emerging market borrowers are beginning to look at the dollar sector again, with many awaiting South Korea's \$3.0 billion global bond to hit the screens before pricing new issues.

"The timing for us is interesting. It is coming at a time of the Korea bond. There is strong demand for our paper. The mood for emerging market debt appears to be changing," said Mr. Saidi.

He did not specify how much demand there was for Lebanon's upcoming Eurobond issues. But a banking source told Reuters that demand amounted to about 60 per cent of the \$800 million in Eurobonds.

"We will tally all the bids. I would say distribution between the Middle East, Europe and America would be similar. It is even distribution across," Mr. Saidi said.

He said leading local Lebanese banks were participating in the Eurobond issues.

Mr. Saidi noted that Arab investors from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman in the Gulf were setting their sights on Lebanese debt because the terms are attractive.

"Middle East investors were timid on (previous) longer term debt sales. But now they are interested in the three-year and five-year terms," he said.

Gulf Arabs make up the bulk of foreign investors in Lebanon which has launched a multi-billion dollar reconstruction drive following the 1975-1990 civil war and hopes to restore its status as a regional financial and banking centre.

In March, Lebanon said it had chosen Paribas among eight Other international com-

panies to market and underwrite its \$500 million of three-year Eurobonds — the start of a \$2 billion borrowing programme.

Facing mounting pressure from loose public finances, the country's top leaders struck an agreement last year to shift from costly domestic borrowing to long-term foreign debt.

Lebanon's net internal public debt rose 14.6 per cent in 1997 to 19,741.6 billion Lebanese pounds (\$12.9 billion). The debt in foreign currency increased 32.9 per cent to \$2,351 billion.

A budget deficit equivalent to 59 per cent of expenditure in 1997 prompted analysts to question Lebanon's ability to tap international debt markets. Several international rating agencies warned of a possible downgrade if the government failed to put its finances in order, hitting Lebanese equities.

Central Bank Governor Riad Salameh said in London after the Eurobond investor presentation that Lebanon's economy is expected to grow by around 5.0 per cent in 1998, up from an estimated 3.5 per cent in 1997.

He said that Lebanon's year-on-year inflation was expected to be below 6.0 per cent in 1998, down from 7.8 per cent in 1997.

## Asia's billionaires feeling the pinch

HONG KONG (AFP) — Asia's tycoon's are feeling the pinch amid the region's economic turmoil, with some of them scraping by on their last few billion U.S. dollars or so, according to a new Forbes survey.

Forbes Magazine's annual "Global Power Elite" survey of the world's wealthiest people shows the biggest loser was tobacco tycoon Wonsidjojo, head of Indonesia's Gudang Garam, who lost a cool \$5.2 billion since last July, as Asia's stock markets and currencies tumbled.

Asia's richest man, Hong Kong's Lee Shau-kee of Henderson Land, let \$4.5 billion slip between his fingers and now has to make do with personal assets estimated at \$10 billion.

"Hong Kong is still one of the best places in the world to invest money," Mr. Lee told Forbes. "We are going full speed ahead."

The best-known tycoon in the territory, Li Ka-shing dropped a mere \$2.2 billion to be down to under \$9 billion, while Malaysia's Robert Kuok lost an estimated 40 per

cent of his net worth to \$4.2 billion, according to Forbes.

Meanwhile, the world's richest man Bill Gates was cashing in, adding \$9.7 billion to his personal fortune which now stands at an estimated \$64 billion.

Many of his U.S. and European super rich colleagues also picked up some of the slack from their Asian counterparts.

All told, some \$774 billion have been wiped off the paper valuation of Asia's public trading companies in the past nine months.

As a group, the 57 Asian tycoons in Forbes' "Global Power Elite" 200 are down \$61 billion, despite recent rallies in many South East Asian markets.

"As a rule, the richer the Asian tycoon, the bigger the fall," says Forbes.

However it asserts, "there are now bargains galore in Asia."

Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew agrees.

There will just be "a setback of two to four years," he told Forbes.

## Conoco to study \$120m petroleum coke venture in Dubai

DUBAI (AFP) — Continental Oil Co. (Conoco) of the United States is to carry out a feasibility study for a \$120 million petroleum coke calcinating plant in Dubai, the Gulf emirate has announced.

Government-controlled Dubai Investments said it has signed a memorandum of understanding with Conoco and one of its affiliates, Venco, for the study. The projected capacity of the plant is 400,000 tonnes, the Dubai company said in a statement, adding that production could start in late 1999.

Petroleum coke is a refined product used mainly by the steel and aluminium industries.

"Calcined coke produced by the proposed facility initially would be marketed to Dubai Aluminium (Dubai) and other customers in the region whose imports of petroleum coke are expected to increase dramatically with the planned start-up of additional smelters," the statement said.

Bahrain's Alba aluminium smelter has also announced it is considering the construction of a coke calcinating plant.

Qatar in November signed an agreement with Norsk Hydro of Norway to set up an aluminium smelter which would enter production in 2002, and Oman is also considering setting up an aluminium smelter.

The aluminium industry is competitive in the oil-rich Gulf because of its cheap electricity costs.

## REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	TL	MLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8449	0.6958	1.5180	132.00	1.4222	1819.25	2.0793	6.1814
DE Mark	0.5420	1.0000	0.3225	0.6231	71.34	0.7706	985.89	1.1270	3.3604
GB Sterling	1.5790	3.0884	1.0000	2.5487	221.88	2.3879	3084.10	3.4911	10.3786
CH Franc	0.6583	1.2141	0.3917	1.0000	66.91	0.8367	1197.03	1.3683	4.0878
JP Yen	0.0076	1.3957	0.4506	1.1489	1.0000	1.0768	13.77	157.43	4.5798
CA Dollar	0.7031	1.2955	0.4183	1.0689	1.08	1.0000	1278.46	1.4612	4.3439
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0132	0.3269	0.8634	1380.28	0.7810	11.42	1.3398	3.9348
NL Guilder	0.4899	0.9871	0.2881	0.7304	63.44	0.6837	874.44	1.0000	2.9718
FR Franc	0.1618	0.2983	0.0962	0.2459	21.33	0.2299	33.62	33.6200	1.0000


Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7080	3.7602	0.3770	3.6398	3.0854	3.6726	1527.20	3.4170
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2894	0.5317	5.1337	4.4307	5.1800	2154.02	4.8195
Saudi Riyal	0.2687	0.1891	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.8914	0.98	407.23	0.9112
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8807	9.9477	1.0000	9.85	8.6101	9.74	4051.04	9.0639
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0303	1.0303	1.0000	0.8839	1.01	419.58	0.9388
Kuwait Dinar	3.2744	2.3215	12.2795	1.2344	11.92	12.03	5000.65	0.9388	0.9388
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1931	1.0211	1.0206	0.9911	0.8832	1.00	415.84	0.9304
Lebanese/1000	0.65	0.4642	2.4555	0.2469	2.3833	2.2000	2.4045	1.00	2.2374
Egyptian	0.2927	0.2075	1.0875	0.1103	1.0652	0.8894	1.0748	446.94	1.0000

Energy					
Oils	Last	Revised	Currency	USD	DEM
Brent	14.44	14.98	SA Riyal	0.2687	0.4921
W. Texas	16.25	16.80	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.50249
Bonny	14.41	14.98	KW Dinar	3.2744	1.95008
Dubai	13.18	13.18	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.89476
UL Gas	160.00	160.00	CY Pound	1.8555	3.4251

Energy			
Commodity	Last	Delivery	
Coffee (c/lbs)	153.08	Spot	
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1873	Spot	
Sugar (\$/ton)	258.5	Spot	
Wheat (\$/ton)	90.5	Spot	
Soya (c/lbs)	27.28	Spot	
Tea (slg/kg)	150	Spot	
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot	
Rice (\$/ton)	400	Spot	

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1899	1.1938	
DE Mark	0.3873	0.3882	
CH Franc	0.4724	0.4748	
FR Franc	0.1155	0.1161	
JP Yen	0.8403	0.843	
NL Guilder	0.3436	0.3483	
IT Lira	0.3925	0.3945	

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSEHOLD BANK CHANGES AMMAN 30/03/1998															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607173															
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY											30/03/1998				
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OFFER PRICE	PRICE	CHANGE					
346.000	250.000	ARAB BANK	13.7	1.20	1	20	6685	334.50	334.25	-0.25					
S 1.340	1.100	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	41	61202	102205	1.67	1.67	-					
S 3.540	1.250	BANK OF JORDAN	E	0.00	8	154000	192535	1.25	1.30	+0.05					
1.300	0.890	MID. EAST INV. BK.	E	0.00	6	1054	969	1.74	1.73	-0.02					
2.680	1.650	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	E	0.00	4	6500	11245	1.73	1.73	-					
S 5.300	4.650	THE HOUSING BK.	E	1.90	5	6100	31110	5.10	5.10	-					
1.000	0.920	JOR. CUP. SEC.	E	1.10	50	728500	450735	1.73	1.73	-					
S 4.020	1.950	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	E	4.90	2	550	1078	1.97	1.96	-0.01					
1.400	0.800	BEIT AL-HAL (BATHHA)	E	17.86	1	100	84	0.85	0.84	-0.01					
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 232.91	CHNG: -0.01	115	958026	796646
2.400	1.590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	E	5.6	12.38	3	8250	16665	1.98	2.02	+0.04				
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 121.97	CHNG: -0.19	3	8250	16665
2.140	1.550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	E	4.85	11	6250	12875	2.06	2.06	-					
4.030	1.320	IRBED ELECTRICITY	E	5.58	2	400	824	2.10	2.06	-0.04					
S 5.500	2.450	EMKEN MINERALS	E	0.00	1	100	475	5.00	4.78	-0.22					
S 7.500	5.130	NATL. OWNERS FED.	E	3.75	2	1600	5315	3.33	3.30	-0.03					
1.550	0.930	VEICLS. PORTFOLIO	E	0.00	13	8850	9162	1.05	1.02	-0.03					
S 1.590	0.370	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	E	0.00	3	1550	589	4.00	3.80	-0.20					
1.090	0.900	ZARQA EDUCATION	E	0.00	3	2500	2375	0.95	0.95	-					
+ 1.830	1.540	UNIFIED CO.	E	7.19	6	1350	2066	1.54	1.53	-0.01					
- 810	0.600	UNION LAND DEV.	E	0.00	3	1500	960	0.64	0.65	+0.01					
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 117.99	CHNG: -0.08	44	24100	34641
4.480	2.690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	E	4.06	16	16575	45106	2.73	2.71	-0.02					
4.140	3.050	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	E	3.09	3	162	522	3.30	3.24	-0.06					
7.050	5.620	ARAB POTASH CO.	E	3.33	1	200	1150	6.00	5.75	-0.25					
S 2.260	1.100	INDUSTRIAL COMB. AGR.	E	0.00	24	19500	24816	1.28	1.33	+0.05					
5.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	E	3.92	23	12000	61697	5.11	5.10	-0.01					
+ 2.130	1.780	GENERAL MINING	E	4.12	1	200	340	1.78	1.70	-0.08					
6.150	4.400	DAR ADAMA TV. CHN.	E	14.04	14	339	20008	5.95	5.70	-0.25					
3.440	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	E	8.96	1	100	279	2.80	2.79	-0.01					
- 570	400	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	E	0.00	15	14750	6998	0.49	0.47	-0.02					
1.110	0.680	ARAB PAPER COM. TRD.	E	0.00	1	500	350	0.71	0.70	-0.01					
S 510	0.200	NATIONAL IND.	E	0.00	4	9000	4680	0.54	0.55	+0.01					
- 820	0.370	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEN.	E	0.00	18	18300	7320	0.40	0.40	-					
S 3.000	0.920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MFAC	E	27.0	0.00	12	8793	1.14	1.12	-0.02					
S 190	0.000	JOR. GOLD-CHEN	E	0.00	26	47850	72792	0.58	0.57	-0.01					
1.560	1.150	ARAB PHARM. CHEN.	E	5.38	4	6710	3523	1.31	1.30	-0.01					
1.060	0.470	KAMBER INVEST.	E	0.00	3	500	259	1.50	1.51	+0.01					
S 1460	0.810	DRIV. MOD. INDS.	E	0.00	3	1281	1281	0.02	0.02	-					
S 1330	0.690	JOR. INDS. PRODUCTS	E	10.6	12.66	2	519	409	0.75	0.79	+0.04				
1.620	1.350	NATL. CHEMICALS	E	4.79	7	12010	17539	1.47	1.46	-0.01					
1.080	0.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	E	0.00	32	32589	33815	1.04	1.04	-					
1.260	0.790	IND. BAY WAREHOUSE	E	0.00	30	180	300	0.80	0.80	-					
1.220	0.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	E	0.00	4	4250	4293	1.01	1.01	-					
- 860	0.640	JORDAN STEEL	E	38.0	0.00	20	47224	36696	0.88	0.84	-0.04				
- 820	0.570	MID. EAST COMPLEX	E	6.15	6	3750	2352	0.63	0.62	-0.01					
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											INDEX: 108.76	CHNG: -2.32	259	267374	324500
GRAND TOTAL											INDEX: 166.00	CHNG: -0.80	421	1275750	1727451
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY											30/03/1998				
530	340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	E	0.00	7	24000	9360	0.39	0.39	-					
- 640	600	UNION INV. SOF.	E	0.00	35	2021	74	0.74	0.74	-					
- 1020	960	ARAB FIV. INV.	E	0.00	64	236150	99945	0.44	0.44	-0.02					
1.000	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	E	0.00	5	26397	26397	1.00	1.00	-					
- 780	610	AL-SHARQA 75%	E	0.00	3	37005	358	0.68	0.68	-					
- 120	100	JOR. INVEST. CO. JENCO	E	0.00	14	16500	2264	0.14	0.14	-					
- 640	370	ARAB FOOD & MED.	E	0.00	2	550	259	0.48	0.47	-0.01					
- 470	240	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	E	0.00	13	35500	1325	0.37	0.38	+0.01					
- 360	250	NATL. WIRE INV. AMTICO	E	0.00	19	64350	34765	0.58	0.58	-					
- 520	400	ARAB SELECT. INDS.	E	0.00	1	250	105	0.40	0.42	+0.02					
- 690	580	MIDEAST PHARM. SOF.	E	0.00	3	1071	928	0.63	0.63	-					
- 1800	800	UNION ZORABO 75%	E	0.00	6	12100	14554	1.13	1.17	+0.04					
- 460	240	INDS. ENG.	E	0.00	2	2000	560	0.28	0.28	-					
- 830	500	INDS. CERAMIC	E	0.00	6	6350	3173	0.51	0.50	-0.01					
- 350	250	ADVANCED PHARM. IND.	E	0.00	5	1850	1075	0.52	0.52	-					
+ 740	460	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	18	18500	8222	0.46	0.44	-0.02					
- 950	470	OPTICALS HEARING 75%	E	0.00	2	3900	1233	0.60	0.60	-					
- 1800	700	NATL. LUMINITE. 75%	E	94.6	11	15000	8450	0.60	0.60	-					
- 1310	1.000	NUTRIDIN	P	0.00	3	9340	9807	1.05	1.05	-					
- 1.000	750	KEDAL PRINT CO. 75%	E	8.61	23	32250	20470	0.90	0.88	-0.02					
GRAND TOTAL											223	595288	265386		
* How 12 months low															
S : Stock divided during the past 12 months															
N : Listed during the past 12 months															
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more															
E : Negative P/E															
+ : Earning is zero or M/A for the most recent year															



# Hakkinen wins Brazilian GP

SAO PAULO (AFP) — Mika Hakkinen of Finland started superbly and led from start-to-finish in his McLaren-Mercedes to win Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos.

Hakkinen's teammate David Coulthard of Scotland was second as the dominant McLaren team staged a repeat of their 1-2 finish in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

It was Hakkinen's third straight Grand Prix triumph following his win in the final race of last season at Jerez and in Melbourne earlier this month.

The silver McLaren cars completely controlled the race and none of their rivals was able to mount a serious charge.

"The most important part was the start — that set me up for the race," said Hakkinen.

"I took it really easy at the end because there was no use pushing it, although I could have gone faster than I did."

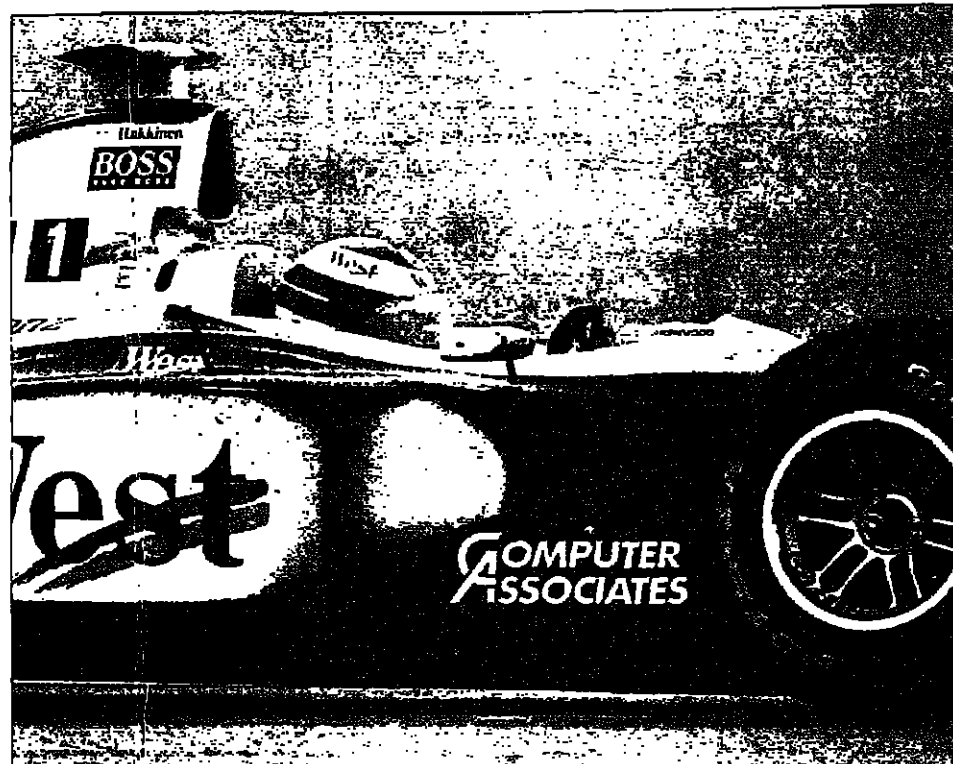
Two-time world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany was third in his Ferrari but well off the pace. Then came Alexander Wurz of Austria in a Benetton. Heinz-Harald Frentzen of Germany in a Williams and Giancarlo Fisichella of Italy in a Benetton.

Defending world champion Jacques Villeneuve of Canada finished out of the points in seventh place in his Williams. Villeneuve won this race last year on his way to the world title.

The McLaren 1-2 was achieved without any of the controversy that tainted the Melbourne race and qualifying here.

Hakkinen, on pole for the second straight race, got the jump on Coulthard from the start, taking a clear lead as the 22 starters roared off the grid.

He eventually clocked 1hr 37min 11.747sec (an average of 190.763kph) for the 72-lap race — a



Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen of Finland drives his McLaren in the Brazilian Grand Prix at the Interlagos race track in Sao Paulo. Hakkinen won the race followed by teammate British David Coulthard who placed second and German Michael Schumacher of Ferrari third. (Reuters photo)

total of 309.024km around the 4.292km Interlagos circuit.

"Mika has had the edge over me all weekend so I have got to be happy with the six points," said Coulthard.

"In the past the starts is where I have had the advantage over Mika, but he has clearly been working hard on them over the winter."

Coulthard was 1.1secs back after closing on the 29-year-old Finn in the dying stages, but third-placed Schumacher was over a minute in arrears. Only the first four cars were on the same lap at the end.

Hakkinen extended his championship lead over Coulthard to eight points as the McLarens dominated despite the car's third, pedal braking system being ruled illegal by race stewards on Saturday.

"It's great to have 20 points after just two races," said Hakkinen. "Obviously it's given me a lot of confidence for the rest of the season."

The stewards upheld a protest led by Ferrari

against the braking system, deciding that it was in effect a steering device which is outlawed in Formula One.

McLaren, along with Jordan and Williams who had also introduced a similar system, were forced to disable it.

McLaren's insistence that the system, which helps braking in corners, was only partially responsible for their success was borne out again by Sunday's result.

There was also no repeat of the "team orders" row which erupted after Coulthard allowed Hakkinen to pass him in Melbourne and take the chequered flag.

On a sweltering day, the McLarens were red-hot from the start, even though their rivals were not.

Ralf Schumacher crashed out on the first lap, sending his Jordan sideways off the track, and less than half the field were still running at the end — although there were no potentially dangerous crashes.

Hakkinen and

Coulthard immediately began to build a big gap. The flying Finn had a 1.2 sec advantage after only three laps, which he increased to 2sec after 10 laps. He never relinquished his grip.

Coulthard darted into the pits for fresh fuel and rubber at the mid-way point and such was the McLarens' advantage over the chasing pack that he still emerged in second spot.

Hakkinen made his stop three laps later and came out with his lead intact as he headed for another win to maintain his perfect start to the season.

Both leaders were given a pit board reading "cool" — an indication it was unnecessary to push things too far as they completed McLaren's third straight 1-2 finish.

All the action, indeed, was further back as Michael Schumacher, Frentzen and Wurz duelled for the minor placings.

Schumacher ultimately prevailed, winning his first points of the season for Ferrari.

## Inzaghi eyes World Cup shirt

MILAN (AFP) — Filippo Inzaghi is counting on Juventus to get him a place in this summer's World Cup finals, after the latest goal rush from the Italian striker.

Inzaghi scored twice in Saturday night's 4-1 victory over AC Milan and bagged a hat-trick against Ukrainian champions Dynamo Kiev in Kiev to book Juventus into Wednesday night's European Cup semi-final against Monaco.

With 23 goals between league and cup duty this season, Inzaghi believes he deserves a place in Cesare Maldini's list of 22 at France '98, alongside Juventus strike partner Alessandro Del Piero.

"Maldini knows me really well, we've spent a long time together," said Inzaghi, whose international career started at Under-21 level under Maldini in December 1993, and continued until March 1996.

And a year after that, almost to the day, Inzaghi got his first call-up at senior level after Maldini replaced Arrigo Sacchi as national coach.

"I don't think there will be any problems," he said. "Especially if I continue to play at this level with Juventus. I'll be honest, with performances like these, I hope that I deserve a place."

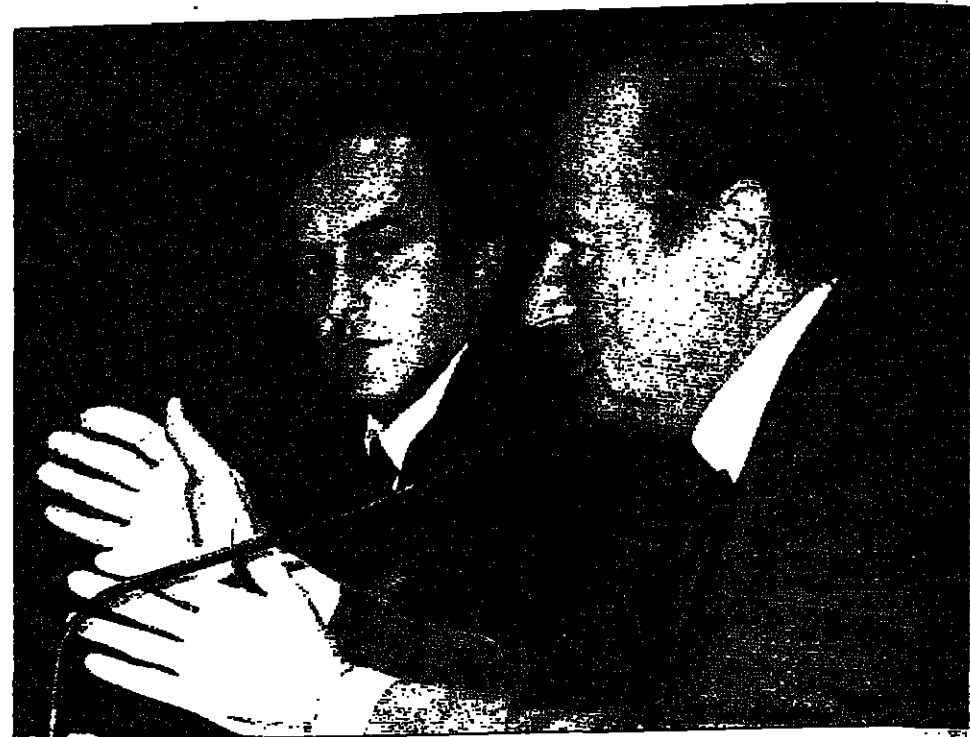
However, Inzaghi faces stiff competition for a ticket to France.

Maldini will probably only take five strikers with him and four places are pretty well sewn up: Del Piero, Fabrizio Ravanelli, Pierluigi Casiraghi and Christian Vieri.

That leaves Inzaghi, USA '94 hero Roberto Baggio, Chelsea's Gianfranco Zola and Enrico Chiesa to fight for the remaining slot.

Chiesa scored twice for Parma on Sunday as he single-handedly hauled them back from 2-0 down to 2-2, earning his side a valuable point.

"Obviously, I'm thinking about the finals, in the next few weeks there's a place in the squad at stake," Chiesa said. "Maldini knows me and has given me my chance in the past."



FIFA Secretary General Sepp Blatter gestures during a press conference during which he announced his intention to pursue his goal of becoming the soccer's governing body President. Blatter also confirmed that French soccer great Michel Platini (L) would fill a newly-created post of FIFA's Director of Sports if he wins the June 8 election at the FIFA congress (Reuters photo)

## Blatter calls for clean campaign

PARIS (AFP) — FIFA general secretary Sepp Blatter called on Lennart Johansson on Monday to cut out the mud-slinging in the campaign to succeed Joao Havelange as FIFA president.

The 62-year-old, who said he had the backing of world champions Brazil and 14 other national federations, made his plea as he officially announced he would stand against Johansson.

Johansson and a majority of FIFA's executive committee have been demanding that Blatter stand down as secretary general, claiming he could not do his job properly if he was also busy electioneering for the most powerful job in sport.

Johansson, put forward by UEFA, with 50 of the 51 members signing his nomination form, has also accused Blatter of misusing his position as FIFA general secretary to campaign for the top job.

But Blatter, who has been FIFA's top administrator for the past 16 years, made it clear he would not surrender his post.

However in a bid to reach a compromise he said he would move out of his office in FIFA House in Zurich and not be involved directly in the day to day running of the organisation.

"I am doing that of my own free will in a bid to lower the temperature and to cool tempers," said Blatter.

He added that he would hand over organisation of the FIFA Congress, which elects the new president, and daily FIFA paperwork to his deputy Michel Zen-Ruffinen.

Blatter also announced that Michel Platini, a former European Player of the Year and France national coach but currently the World Cup Organising Committee co-president, would be his executive sports

director if he won the election on June 8 in Paris, two days before the World Cup starts.

Johansson is hampered in his battle for the presidency by the opposition of Havelange who is stepping down after 24 years.

The Brazilian is determined to stop Johansson taking over and has publicly supported Blatter, who has been his right hand man with the Zurich-based organisation for the past 16 years.

Even a failed attempt by Blatter four years ago to oust Havelange seems to have been forgotten by the outgoing president.

"It is no secret that Havelange is supporting me," said Blatter on Monday.

"Once he was in front of me, now he is behind me," joked the Swiss-German.

Blatter said that if elected he played to involve players, referees and coaches with FIFA much more than present.

He also wants to dilute the power of the FIFA executive committee as well as expanding it and instead create a special 'bureau' to deal with the day to day problems facing FIFA.

It also wants to change the FIFA statutes.

So far Blatter has not been backed by any of the Asian or European federations but he admitted that he expected at least some Europeans to join his campaign.

"They have two months to consider my plans. Don't forget until today there was only one candidate so it was natural that they supported Johansson," said Blatter.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHI  
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### ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- A85 ♠A72 ♠AKJ2 ♠855
- The bidding has proceeded:
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
- 1♣ Pass 1♠ 2♠
- What action do you take?
- A - Normally, you show a minimum opening bid by passing after enemy interference. However, it never pays to be silent when you have good four-card support for partner's suit. Bid three hearts.
- Q. 2 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- A86 ♠7 ♠1053 ♠A4108
- The bidding has proceeded:
- WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
- 1♣ Pass 1♠ 2♠
- What action do you take?
- A - You should respond to partner's overall suit though it were an opening bid. Although your heart honors might not be of any value, you still have three trumps, an ace and a ruffing value in the enemy suit, not to mention potentially useful intermediate cards. Bid two spades.
- Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- AQ10753 ♠QJ7 ♠AKJ7 ♠8
- Partner opens the bidding with one spade. What do you respond?
- A - It depends on your methods. If you play that a jump to three spades is forcing, by all means take that action. If you use limit jump raises and do not have a specific understanding about a forcing raise, make awaiting bid of two diamonds before jumping to four spades — an immediate leap to four
- spaces is preemptive. A split bid of four clubs is another choice.
- Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- A85 ♠Q95 ♠AQ109 ♠A743
- Partner opens the bidding with three clubs. What do you bid now?
- A - At this vulnerable, partner promises seven tricks with clubs as trumps. Three no trump may be the winning action, but I ask of a secure heart stopper could I be fatal. We would essay five clubs. It should not be any worse than a finesse, and could be laydown.
- Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- A85 ♠K108 ♠1075 ♠A1062
- Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with three diamonds. What action do you take?
- A - The preempt has taken the auction to a level where you cannot explore for the best spot. Despite the fact that you have only one diamond stopper, three no trump is a better bid than a take out double, which could land you in a woefully inadequate 4-3 fit.
- Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- AES ♠AQ88 ♠AKQ85 ♠86
- The bidding has proceeded:
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
- 1♣ Pass 1♠ 2♠
- What do you bid now?
- A - Make a reverse bid of two hearts. In the modern style that is a one-round force, but even if it is not, you have no very viable action. You need room to locate the best contract, and any off- or strength-showing rebid below 3♠ shows you of bidding space and mis-describes this holding.

## Transfer fees bites into Man. United profits

LONDON (AFP) — Teddy Sheringham's £3.5 million move from Tottenham last summer helped cut Manchester United's pre-tax profits by £4.6 million in the six months to the end of January.

The English champions posted half-year profits before tax of £14.8 million, down from £19.4 million, mainly because of a big increase in transfer spending.

Turnover, though, was up from £50.1 million to £51.6 million.

At the same stage last year, the club was showing a £3.7 million profit on transfers, but the latest figures revealed a 2.6 million deficit.

Underlying profits, before transfer fees, increased from 15.7 million to 17.5 million.

Gate receipts rose by £600,000 to £19 million, reflecting average attendances of 54,300, against an average of 54,100 and an increase in prices and the introduction of 1,000 new executive seats.

Conference and catering incomes were boosted 17 per cent to £3.6 million thanks to greater use of the stadium on non-match days.

Television income rose from 5.9 million to 7.9 million on the back of the new Premier League contract with BSkyB and the club's participation in the Champions' League.

Sponsorship income, which also includes the Umbro kit deal, rose by 300,000 to 5.5 million.

Merchandising turnover fell by 11 per cent to £15.6 million because of a decrease in replica home kit sales. A new strip will be on sale for next season.

United have just agreed a new two-year shirt sponsorship deal with existing backers Sharp, which is the most lucrative in Britain.

## Ronaldo holds map to UEFA glory

MILAN (AFP) — Inter Milan are hoping Ronaldo will show them the way to the UEFA Cup final here on Tuesday night, when they point their compasses at Spartak Moscow.

The Brazilian is in top goal-scoring form at the moment and a handsome victory in their semi-final first leg at San Siro will set Inter on the road to a second consecutive UEFA final.

Ronaldo notched three winners in seven remarkable days last week — a decisive second goal against Milan in Sunday's 3-0 derby triumph.

Brazil's second in their 2-1 win over Germany on Wednesday night and Inter's winner in their 2-1 victory over Vicenza on Saturday.

The fact that the 21-year-old is able to rise to the big occasion, as he did with a winner in the last round against old rivals Schalke 04, is another source of inspiration to the squad.

Inter have a score to settle with this competition after reaching the 1997 final before losing to Schalke on penalties at San Siro.

However, they will have to start the journey back to the final without two of their key midfielders. Argentinean hardman Diego Simeone and Italy's World Cup hopeful Francesco Moriero, both of whom are suspended.

Simeone left Atletico Madrid under a cloud last season but has blossomed at Inter, providing the muscle in midfield which Inter had been missing since Paul Ince went to

Liverpool, and bringing with him a sharper sense of goal than the England skipper.

Simeone scored three times last week, against AC Milan and Vicenza, while Moriero has proved invaluable with his incisive runs from the right flank.

Another midfielder, the recently-acquired Paulo Sousa of Portugal, is not eligible to play in Europe for his new club.

Coach Gigi Simoni's current headache is to re-shuffle his pack and choose the right strike partner for Ronaldo.

One option is an aggressive 4-3-1-2 line-up with Javier Zanetti, Ze Elias and Benoit Caivet in the middle and Youri Djorkaeff supporting two strikers — Ronaldo and Ivan Zamorano or Nwankwo Kanu.

More likely is that Dutchman Aron Winter will be used in midfield, rather than defence, removing the need for Djorkaeff's supporting role.

At the back, Salvatore Fresta returns as libero while Nigerian Taribo West, whose extra-time header at Gelsenkirchen put them into the semis, will be on man-to-man marking duty.

Spartak, looking to reach their first ever European cup final, may have gone down 2-1 at St Petersburg on Saturday, but Simoni will not be setting much store by the Russian league defeat, particularly as half the Spartak side were involved in Russia's 2-1 win over the Italian

Under-21 side last week.

Team coach Oleg Romantsev clearly hasn't, saying: "It can only be a temporary loss of concentration. It's just not possible for a team who can beat Ajax Amsterdam at home and away can then lose to St Petersburg."

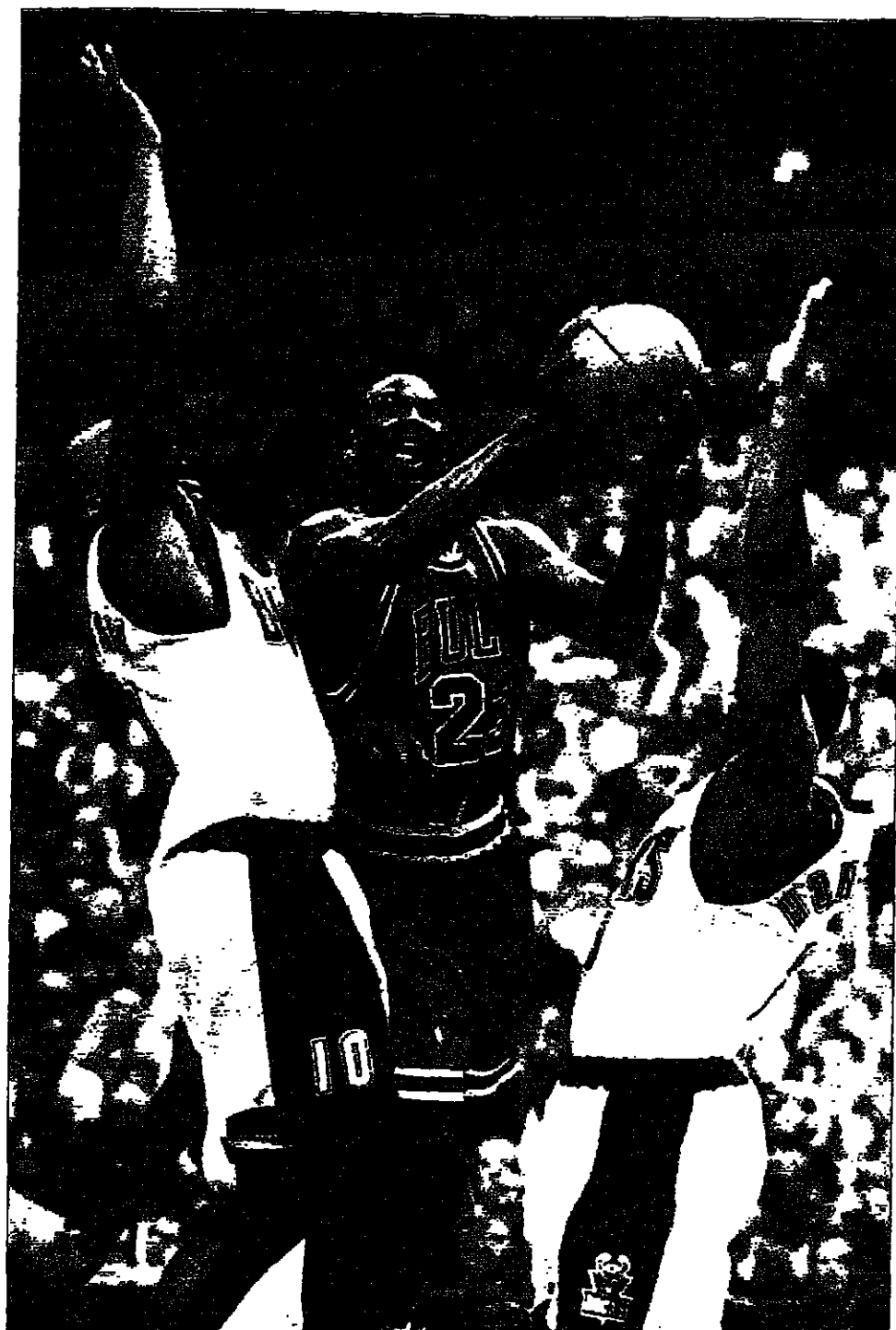
Spartak's man to be watched, probably by West, is 21-year striker Aleksandr Shirkov, who scored twice in Amsterdam and once in Moscow as Spartak dumped Ajax out of the quarter-finals.

One or two more from Shirkov here on Tuesday night would leave Inter with a mountain to climb in the second leg, with or without Simeone and Moriero.

However, the Russians will be hindered by the suspension of playmaker Andrei Tikhonov although Dmitri Alenichev, who impressed in Russia's 1-0 win over France last week, is an able replacement and midfielder partner Ilya Tsybalyar has been in the goals in the past week scoring four in two matches.

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 2	GALLERIA 1	Hisham Yanes Theatre
	Leonardo Di Caprio ... in		The biggest cinema production	Kim Basinger... in	ABDOUN	ABDOUN	STARTING APRIL 6TH
	ROMEO & JULIET	SALT ON OUR SKIN	TITANIC	L.A. CONFIDENTIAL	GRAND OPENING	GRAND OPENING	Don't Laugh Please
	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Shows: 12:00, 3:00, 7:00, 10:30 p.m.	Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	Shows: 5:15, 8:30	Shows: 3:30, 7:00, 10:30	Starring Hisham Yanes, Amal Dabbas, Rania Kurdi and the group





Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan drives through Milwaukee Bucks' forward Armon Gilliam (L) and Gerald Honeycutt in the third quarter at the Bradley Center in Milwaukee. Jordan scored thirty points as the Bulls defeated the Bucks 104-87 to sweep the season series (Reuters photo)

## Pacers win; Hawks beat Pistons

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — The Indiana Pacers set an NBA record by scoring the fewest points in a game since the advent of the shotclock, losing 74-55 to the San Antonio Spurs on Sunday.

The Pacers played without their two best players. Reggie Miller was suspended for one game for a flagrant foul against Charlotte's Vlade Divac on Friday, and Rik Smits has an injured foot.

The Pacers, who scored 133 points on Friday, shot 27 percent and had nine points in the fourth period. The previous low was 57, set three times, last by Orlando against Cleveland on Dec. 4, 1996.

**Bulls 104, Bucks 87:** In Milwaukee, Michael Jordan scored 30 points, many of them with flashbulbs popping throughout the Bradley Center, as Chicago won its ninth straight. Jordan played less than 3 1/2 minutes in the fourth quarter, but his consecutive fadeaway jumpers had the fans standing and cheering late in the game.

The crowd began to file out after Jordan left the game with 1:05 left and the Bulls ahead 100-83. Even without flu-stricken Scottie Pippen for the second straight game, the Bulls didn't need Jordan fulltime to put away the injury-decimated Bucks, who lost their 12th straight to Chicago.

**Heat 109, Rockets 77:** In Miami, Dan Majerle scored a season-high 22 points and Tim Hardaway had 16 points and a season-high 15 assists as Miami clinched its second straight Atlantic Division title.

Alonzo Mourning outplayed Hakeem Olajuwon in the battle of two of the NBA's top centers, outscoring the Houston All-Star 16-15 and rebounding him 15-4.

The Rockets, who dropped their 13th consecutive regular-season game against Florida teams, were playing without injured Charles Barkley (shoulder) and Clyde Drexler (groin).

**Hawks 118, Pistons 95:** In Atlanta, Tyrone Corbin and Steve Smith scored 20 points a piece and Atlanta had its highest scoring game of the season. The Hawks scored a season-low 74 points in a loss to Chicago on Friday night. But on Sunday, six Hawks scored in double figures as the team surpassed a previous season-high of 117 points at Toronto on March 17.

Alan Henderson scored 19 points, Mookie Blaylock and Dikembe Mutombo 13 apiece and Eldridge Recasner added 11 as Atlanta moved within 2 1/2 games of Charlotte in the battle for the fourth playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

**Magic 95, Raptors 68:** In Toronto, Horace Grant scored 16 points and Orlando held Toronto to the fewest points in franchise history. Doug Christie was the only offensive presence for Toronto, scoring 20 points on 6-for-17 shooting. The other four starters combined to shoot 7-for-31.

The Magic, who came into the game in a three-way tie with the New Jersey Nets and Washington Wizards for the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, improved to 37-35.

**Cavaliers 97, Hornets 82:** In Cleveland, Shawn Kemp had 25 points and 11 rebounds and Derek Anderson scored 16 as Cleveland beat weary Charlotte. Charlotte like the team with the fourth-best record in the NBA's Eastern Conference.

The Hornets shot 29 per cent in the first half to trail 52-28, and Glen Rice, held to a

season-low six points on 1-for-11 shooting against the Pacers, was 5-for-13 for 15 points.

The Cavs won for the eighth time in 10 games and stayed in the sixth playoff position in the East.

**Suns 106, Grizzlies 98:** In Phoenix, Cliff Robinson scored 20 points and Kevin Johnson came off the bench to contribute 15 points and 11 assists as Phoenix pulled away late to beat Vancouver. Danny Manning broke a 94-94 tie with an 18-foot jumper with just over two minutes remaining.

The Suns did most of the rest of their scoring from the foul line as they closed the game with a 12-4 run. Shaq Abdul-Rahim had 30 points and Blue Edwards for the Grizzlies, who have lost 15 straight road games since Jan. 23.

**76ers 99, Celtics 94:** In Philadelphia, Derrick Coleman scored 13 of his 34 points in the fourth quarter as Philadelphia snapped a five-game losing streak. Allen Iverson added 20 points for Philadelphia, which avenged an 18-point loss to the Celtics a week ago. Boston, which lost for the sixth time in its last seven road games, was led by Antoine Walker's 34 points and 12 rebounds and Ron Mercer's 18 points.

**Timberwolves 104, Kings 96:** In Sacramento, California, Kevin Garnett scored a season-high 32 points with 14 rebounds as Minnesota sent Sacramento to its 11th straight loss. Garnett shot 15-for-22 from the field in 40 minutes with six assists, four steals and two blocks.

He finished one point shy of matching his career-high. The Timberwolves, winners of three straight and five of six, led by 10 points after three quarters and opened the fourth with a 9-2 run for a 85-68 lead, their biggest of the game.

**Trail Blazers 99, Warriors 83:** In Oakland, California, Isaiah Rider had 21 points, including 14 in the third quarter, as Portland pulled away to beat Golden State.

The Trail Blazers, who clinched a playoff spot Thursday, have won three straight after losing their previous three. Brian Grant had 19 points and Damon Stoudamire added 12. The Warriors, losers of 10 of their last 11 games, had four players in double figures led by Clarence Weatherspoon and Jim Jackson with 18 each.

**Clippers 108, Mavericks 86:** In Los Angeles, Lamond Murray scored 27 points and James Robinson added 24 as Los Angeles snapped its five-game losing streak. All five Clippers' starters scored in double figures and their defense held Dallas 18 points under what Los Angeles opponents had been averaging.

**Lakers 116, Wizards 89:** In Inglewood, California, Shaquille O'Neal had 33 points and 13 rebounds despite sitting out the fourth quarter as the Los Angeles Lakers overwhelmed Washington.

The win was the ninth straight at home and 12th in 14 games overall for the Lakers, who trail the Pacific Division-leading Seattle SuperSonics by two games with 11 left in the regular season.

Kobe Bryant added 15 points — all in the second quarter — and Eddie Jones had 13 for the Lakers, who rested all of their starters except Derek Fisher in the fourth quarter.

## Williams gains momentum in race toward top

KEY BISCAINE (AFP)

— It's a long way from No. 10 to No. 1, but Venus Williams is eager to make the trip.

Williams will assume the world No. 10 ranking on Monday thanks to her victory in the \$4.6 million Lipton Championships on Saturday, a triumph that included a semi-final win over world No. 1 Martina Hingis.

It was her second victory this year over Hingis, who had appeared all but invincible at the end of 1997.

Oddly, the closer Williams gets, the more circumspect she becomes.

The player who has brashly proclaimed herself the future number one, didn't want to overestimate her achievement in winning the Lipton, widely seen as the most prestigious event outside of the four Grand Slams.

"I'm coming," she said. "Don't rush me. I'm not there yet."

But Hingis, who captured her fourth Grand Slam singles title at the Australian Open in January, said Williams was definitely narrowing the gap.

"She beat me in Sydney, she beat me now," Hingis said. "She is going to be a very difficult rival."

The two are almost exactly the same age. Williams, born in June of 1980, is three months older.

Both turned professional in 1994, but there the comparisons end.

While Hingis started in the junior ranks, becoming the youngest junior Grand Slam titlist when she won the 1993 French Open junior crown, Williams' father Richard kept Venus and her younger sister Serena out of the junior tournament fray.

It was three years before Williams really made her mark, moving in 1997 from 204th in the world to 22nd, a leap that included an appearance in the U.S. Open final, where she lost to Hingis.

"I'm still not at her level, but I'm progressing," Williams said.

"Now she plays with a lot of confidence," Hingis said. "She controls the points better than she used to and she plays smarter."

The victory at Key Biscayne followed Williams' first WTA Tour win, at Oklahoma City in February.

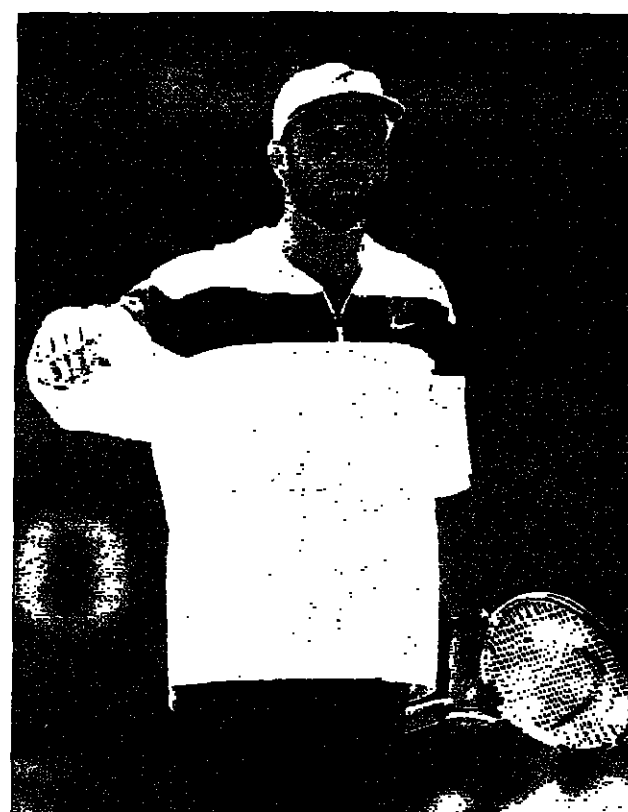
In the Lipton final she downed 16-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova, another sign that the youngsters who have threatened for more than a year to overturn the old order of women's tennis are coming into their own.

Kournikova reached her first WTA Tour final with victories over fifth-seeded Monica Seles, World No. 2 Lindsay Davenport and three-time Grand Slam champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

"I think it's a good sign for the future because if it hadn't been me in the finals, it would have been Martina, or it would have been Serena," Williams said. "It was going to be a teenage final, especially with Anna pulling her end in the bottom draw. Everyone was exposed to the new girls."



Marcelo Rios of Chile returns serve at The Lipton Championships. Rios defeated Agassi 7-5 6-3 6-4 to take the title become the No. 1 ranked men's tennis player in the world (Reuters photo)



Andre Agassi of the U.S. is stunned by a close line call in the second set of his final against Marcelo Rios of Chile at the Lipton Championships. Rios defeated Agassi 7-5 6-3 6-4 to take the title (Reuters photo)

## Rios gains No. 1 ranking with win over Agassi

KEY BISCAINE (AFP)

Marcelo Rios of Chile captured the World No. 1 ranking here Sunday with a 7-5, 6-3, 6-4 victory over Andre Agassi in the final of the Lipton Championships.

Rios ended American Pete Sampras' 102-week reign at the top, his ascendancy will become official when the new rankings are released on Monday.

"Being the best player in the world for Chile is not normal," Rios said. "We have never had a champion be No. 1 in the world in tennis. It's really good. I feel really proud, being Chilean, to be the only one to be No. 1 in the world."

Rios became the first South American, the sixth-youngest man and the fourth left-hander to hold the No. 1 ranking. He is the first to jump straight from No. 3 to No. 1 without stopping at No. 2, and he is the second player to reach No. 1 before winning a Grand Slam title.

The first was Ivan Lendl, who reached the top in 1983, before winning his first Grand Slam crown at the French Open the following year.

The Chilean lost his serve once in the first set — the only break point he faced the entire match — and took advantage of 39 unforced errors by Agassi to prevail in just under two hours.

He claimed his third title of the season and his third title in a prestigious Super Nine event.

"I think winning like this and beating Agassi in the final, a former No. 1, I can't ask for more," said Rios. "I felt like I was winning my serve really easy and was also returning really good. I played a great match and that's the way it is."

Rios, 22, captured his eighth career singles title and third this season as he improved his 1998 record to an ATP Tour-leading 25-3. With his victory at the

Slam title.

Champions Cup at Indian Wells, California, two weeks ago, Rios became the first player to win back-to-back Super Nine events since Agassi won the Canadian Open and the ATP Championships in Cincinnati in 1995.

In January, Rios won the event in Auckland, New Zealand and was a finalist at the Australian Open. Last season, Rios prevailed at Monte Carlo for his first career Super Nine title.

Agassi, who has won two titles this year as he surges back from a dismal 1997, suffered only his fourth defeat in 28 matches this season.

"He played better than I expected," Agassi said of Rios, who he hadn't played before. "I had a little trouble reading his serve, his forehand, and I wasn't quite pulling the trigger on my shots. He's the kind of guy that you can't wait for him to miss — you've got to be able to take it to him. I didn't quite do it."

Agassi was denied a fourth Lipton title, after wins in 1990, 1995 and 1996. With a victory, he would have passed Sampras for first on the all-time list with 10 Super Nine titles.

Agassi, who ended 1997 ranked 122nd in the world, had risen to 31st by the start of the Lipton and will move into the top 30 after reaching the final here.

Agassi suggested that for Rios to solidify his status as the No. 1 player, he will have to win a Grand Slam title.

"He's No. 1 right now," said Agassi. "How he does in the Grand Slams, how everybody does in the Grand Slams, ultimately determines the end of the year ranking. He'll have to win a slam this year to be No. 1 in the players' eyes. To be No. 1 in his own eyes, he'd have to win a Slam."

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## Neville boys to stay until 2005

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Premiership champions Manchester United received a boost here on Monday as they announced that international defenders Gary and Phil Neville had extended their contracts with the 'Red Devils' till 2005.

The brothers, who have been the defensive backbone for United's domination of English football for the past three years, were originally tied to the club till 2002 but United solicitor and director Maurice Watkins confirmed the club wanted to reward the duo for their progress this season.

Gary Neville, who like Phil owes his success not to manager Alex Ferguson but to his unsung assistant Brian Kidd who has been responsible for United's superb youth policy, has become a stalwart of the United defence and the 23-year-old has captained the side twice in recent weeks.

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## Palestinian policemen prepare for Israeli pullout

JERICHO (AFP) — As the United States tries to push Israel to conduct a troop withdrawal from the West Bank, the Palestinians are training some 4,000 police recruits to take control of the "newly liberated" areas, officials said Monday.

In a training ground in the West Bank town of Jericho, candidates to join the Preventive Security Service practice storming buildings, crawl along the ground as live bullets are fired over their heads and train in camouflage.

"We have between 3,000 and 4,000 new soldiers being trained in preparation for the

redeployment which Israel is due to implement," said their head trainer, known only by his nom-de-guerre, Abu Al Fahd.

"They're ready to move into the newly liberated areas immediately, once we get the word, even in the middle of the night," Abu Al Fahd told AFP.

But the wait could be long. U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross was on the fourth and probably last day of a mediating mission Monday, so far unable to overcome Israeli opposition to a U.S. plan for conducting the troop withdrawal.

"They will be prepared to protect the Palestinian people

from all threats, no matter where they come from," he said.

The recruits, aged 17-33, ran through a series of military-style exercises, starting with the basics of firing automatic weapons and sidearms.

In one exercise, they stormed a house, leaping through windows and breaking down the door in a simulated rescue of civilians kidnapped by militants.

Recruits applied face-paint and covered their heads in foliage, and others crawled belly-down across the sand while officers fired automatic weapons over their heads.

## Arafat visits Dutch university, due to meet the queen

ROTTERDAM (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Monday addressed a student congress at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam on the first day of a two-day private visit to the Netherlands.

Mr. Arafat and Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok opened the institution's Student Business Week and the Palestinian leader gave a 30-minute speech on the stalled peace process, a university spokesman told AFP.

Mr. Arafat will later meet with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

On Tuesday he is scheduled to discuss the stalled peace

process with Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo in Amsterdam and meet with other representatives of the Dutch foreign ministry and members of the lower chamber of parliament.

The Palestinian leader and Mr. Kok held talks on the crisis between Israel and Palestine during Mr. Arafat's visit here in early February.

Mr. Kok then said the lack of progress in the peace talks was "disappointing" and "frustrating," but insisted that the European Union could play a greater part in political attempts to save the peace process.

President Arafat's visit comes as U.S. Middle East

envoy Dennis Ross reported that his latest round of consultations with Palestinian and Israeli leaders had failed to yield a breakthrough.

In three meetings with Mr. Ross since Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has stood firm on his insistence that Israel will carry out no further troop withdrawals from the West Bank until the Palestinians take concrete action against terrorism.

Another meeting between Mr. Ross, Mr. Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai is scheduled to take place late Monday in an attempt to break the impasse.

## Turkey, Turkish Cypriots move to counter Cyprus' EU membership

NICOSIA (AP) — As the European Union (EU) started enlargement negotiations with prospective members including Cyprus, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem travelled to the Turkish Cypriot sector of the island Monday as part of a plan to move toward so-called "partial integration."

Mr. Cem travelled here in a gesture to bring Turkish Cypriot ministers on his plane back to Turkey for a meeting to discuss closer political and economic cooperation.

The two sides recently agreed to include Turkish Cypriot officials in Turkish delegations at international meetings and to appoint them to diplomatic missions abroad.

"Remember that if pressure and oppression leave you with no other alternative, the decision to integrate with Turkey is always yours," Mr. Cem said, addressing the officials of

the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state that is only recognised by Ankara.

His visit was timed to coincide with the EU's membership talks with Greek Cypriots, who head the internationally recognised government of Cyprus (See story on page 4).

"We call on the EU to very carefully assess the steps it is taking," Mr. Cem said. "The acceptance of the Greek Cypriots as being competent to negotiate on behalf of the whole island is an open violation of international law and denial of reality," Turkey and Turkish Cypriots argue that Cyprus cannot join the EU before a solution has been reached on the divided island and that its admission now would amount to an integration with Greece, an EU member.

"Membership of the Greek Cypriots in the EU would divide the island forever," Turkish Cypriot

leader Rauf Denktaş said during a meeting with Mr. Cem Monday.

Mr. Denktaş has rejected an offer for Turkish Cypriots to join the team that will negotiate the island's entry to the EU.

Angered at the EU's move to begin membership talks, Mr. Denktaş has made equal recognition of his state a precondition for the resumption of deadlocked U.N. negotiations. He repeated his position to U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in Geneva on Saturday.

Cyprus has been divided into Greek and Turkish sectors since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded the northern third of the island to protect the Turkish minority following a short-lived coup by supporters of union with Greece.

Turkey maintains about 30,000 troops on the island.

## 3 more Kurds arrested in Turkey

ANKARA (AP) — Stepping up a broad inquiry into Turkey's biggest Kurdish party, authorities arrested three executives of that party Monday.

The three Democracy Party (DP) officials had gone to the state security court to give testimony on the investigation involving the party when they were arrested. Two of them, Sirri Sakik and Sedat Yurdas, were former deputies from a predecessor Kurdish party, which was shut down in 1994 for separatism.

They were convicted of separatist propaganda and served more than two years in jail. Four other former Kurdish deputies, including Nobel Peace Prize candidate Leyla Zana, remain jailed.

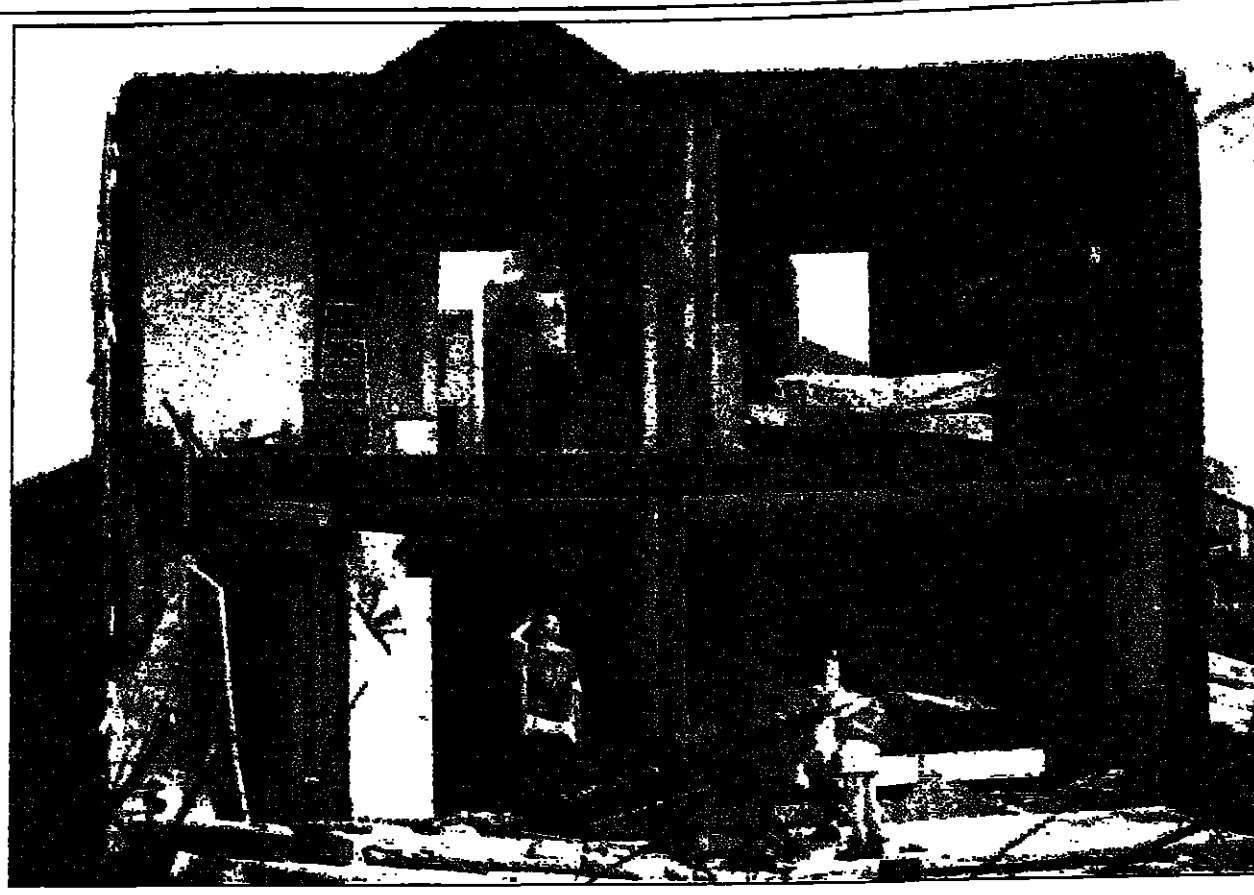
The current investigation was sparked by a 1998 calendar, distributed by the DP, which had pictures of Kurdish rebels killed during fighting, authorities claim.

DP officials described the dead as Kurdish intellectuals who were killed by security forces.

Seven DP executives, including its chairman Murat Bozlak, have already been charged with leading the political wing of the Kurdish rebel organisation Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK). They each face 22 and 1/2 years in prison if convicted.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the three arrested Monday would also be similarly charged.

The PKK's 13-year-old fight for autonomy in south-eastern Turkey has cost more than 37,000 lives.



TORNADO STRICKEN HOME: Residents of a storm-damaged home along North Seventh Street in St. Peter, Minnesota, survey damage to their home after a tornado ripped through the town on Sunday. Tornadoes levelled homes across southern Minnesota on Sunday, killing at least one person and injuring more than two dozen (AP Photo)

## U.N. arms inspections of Iraqi presidential sites reach half-way mark — Dhanapala

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. arms experts reached the half-way mark of their inspections of presidential sites as Iraq agreed in a Feb. 23 accord between Baghdad and the United Nations, started Thursday when the Special Group spent two days visiting Baghdad's sprawling

Radwaniya complex. The accord signed by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, defused a crisis in which the United States and Britain threatened to use military force.

"Iraqi cooperation is positive. There is goodwill on both sides," said Mr. Dhanapala. "Tariq Aziz assisted the visits, which is an indication of the serious concern of Iraq."

Asked if anything unusual was detected at the palaces in northern Iraq, he said: "Not that I am aware of. But as I have said, our task [as diplomats] is to observe."

Twenty diplomats are accompanying inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission

diplomat and arms control expert.

The inspections of Iraq's eight presidential sites, as agreed in a Feb. 23 accord between Baghdad and the United Nations, started Thursday when the Special Group spent two days visiting Baghdad's sprawling

Radwaniya complex. The accord signed by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, defused a crisis in which the United States and Britain threatened to use military force.

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Twenty diplomats are accompanying inspectors of the U.N. Special Commission

(UNSCOM) in charge of eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, as a means of addressing Iraqi concerns over its sovereignty.

Mr. Dhanapala said the palaces in the north were "essentially guest houses, presumably for foreign dignitaries... They are a construction of villas and guest houses."

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein visited his hometown of Tikrit on Sunday, a day after the search of the palace there.

The ruling Baath Party's newspaper, meanwhile, said the special team has "found no trace of proscribed arms and will not find anything in the days to come, at the sites or anywhere else."

"The facts prove that what Iraq says is credible while U.S. and British statements are mere lies," said Al-Thawra, referring to charges they were being used for chemical and biological arms programmes.

"Iraq is fully committed to respecting its accord with the United Nations on inspections

and expects the [U.N.] Security Council to also respect its commitments and lift the international embargo," it said.

U.N. economic sanctions, in force since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, cannot be lifted until UNSCOM has certified the dismantling of Baghdad's chemical and germ warfare programmes as well as long-range missiles.

Mr. Dhanapala, declining to disclose the location of the next inspection, said that the first round of visits to all eight sites should be completed "in the next week."

"Then we would return to our respective countries and I will go back to my job in New York," he said, adding it was up to UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency to determine what sites should be revisited.

The four remaining sites in the initial visits are the presidential palace on the Tigris River in Baghdad, Jijoud near the capital, Al Tharthar some 100 km to the north-west, and the Basra palace in southern Iraq.

## Troops kill over 100 rebels in Algeria — paper

PARIS (R) — Algerian troops have killed more than 100 rebels in a new offensive on rebel strongholds in western Algeria, an Algerian newspaper said on Monday.

Field artillery first pounded the rebels on Ouarsenis Mountain in the western province of Relizane, 270 kilometres from Algiers, and then troops stormed the trapped men. L'Authentique daily said.

Tipped off by two girls who escaped their rebel abductors, the military began the operation last Tuesday, L'Authentique said, adding that the offensive was continuing.

The newspaper is widely believed to be close to Algerian President Liamine Zerrouk's top adviser Mohammed Betchine. Mr. Betchine was head of the military intelligence service until 1989.

L'Authentique said troops killed more than 80 rebels in the first two days of the operation. Another 18 and then more than 20 were killed in two later stages as they rolled over rebel hide-outs.

The reported operation was preceded by a similar offensive in the neighbour-

## Troops kill over 100 rebels in Algeria — paper

Algerian extremists escape to Morocco — report

ALGIERS (AFP) — An armed Algerian Islamist group has fled to Morocco after using a stolen truck to break out of an encircling operation by army troops, a newspaper reported Monday.

Earlier reports had said the Islamist group — comprising between five and eight members — had been surrounded by military personnel in southwest Algeria.

The Islamists had been pursued since kidnapping two civilians earlier this month.

The Al Khabar newspaper reported that the group took a truck, which it abandoned near the border before crossing into Morocco.

The Algerian press has repeatedly accused Morocco of harbouring Islamists opposed to the government in Algiers.

The government blamed Islamists rebels for the massacres.

Algeria plunged into civil strife in early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

Western estimates say more than 65,000 people — rebels, civilians and members of the government security forces — have died in the violence.

The government said about 26,000 civilians and security forces' members had been killed up to 1997. It gave no figure for deaths among the rebels.

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## 'Average' mummies tell about everyday life in ancient Egypt

By Sammy Ketiz

CAIRO Agency France Presse — French archaeologists are examining the remains of commoners' mummies to learn more about ancient Egyptian life, in contrast to other experts who have sought to see it through the eyes of pharaohs and nobles.

"We are working on anonymous (mummies) who did not know how to write and therefore left no trace unlike the pharaohs who marked their presence by texts or monu-

mental drawings on temples," said Françoise Dunand.

"History was also made by anonymous people," said the professor of history of religions from the University of Strasbourg, in eastern France.

"The mummies express themselves if we know how to ask and listen," said Ms. Dunand who has been working on dozens of mummies found in the Western Desert of Egypt with radiologist Roger Lichtenberg and anthropologist Jean-Louis Heim.

Between 1981 and 1993 the team examined every inch of the 72 tombs in the Doush necropolis, south of the Kharga Oasis in the Western Desert.

In 1994 they resumed their work and focused on the Ain Labakha Roman fortress 30 km north-west of Kharga Oasis, where 60 mummies were taken out of their tombs to be X-rayed and studied.

The mummies had been buried in tombs dug into the rock near the village where ancient Egyptians from the

Ptolemaic dynasty lived until the third century after Christ.

"We are conducting a real population study using techniques of medicine, archaeology and anthropology," said Ms. Dunand, whose team works on a monthly shoe-string budget of \$5,000.

The team has accumulated a trove of information: ancient Egyptians had a life expectancy of 38 years, many dyed their hair red and suffered from arthritis.

In addition, ancient Egyptian priests were circum-

cised and their diet consisted of crushed cereals sometimes mixed with sand, olives and raisins.

"When the rich died, special care was given to their mummification and to their sarcophagus while the poor were simply covered in a shroud and placed in a tomb with a stone for pillow and a stone to raise the feet," Ms. Dunand said.

In Ain Labakha, the mummy of a child of a notable had his eyes covered in gold leaf which the ancient

Egyptians believed was "the flesh of Gods" because his parents wanted to deify him in the hereafter. Ms. Dunand explained.

Ancient Egyptians in Ain Labakha also had a sweet tooth. "They ate honey or sugar because we found decayed teeth unlike those at Doush who had excellent teeth," said Ms. Dunand.

Women died early, between the ages of 12 and 40, most of them during labour while men lived to ripe old ages of 40 or 50 and sometimes even 60.

Bilharzia, a parasitic disease contracted from water, was common along with tuberculosis and typhoid.

Ancient Egyptians also suffered from arthritis in their spinal cords "which means that they carried daily heavy loads and that there few beasts of burden in the region."

Ms. Dunand hopes to publish her findings in two months, and after that she expects to start a new round of excavations to shed light on rural Egypt during the rule of the pharaohs.

## Press secretary eats caterpillars in line of duty

GABORONE (R) — White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry has briefed reporters with a bag over his head, pointed out questioners with a carrot, and jumped into a swimming pool fully clothed. On Sunday, he ate a caterpillar. The press representative was waiting with a group of reporters for U.S. President Bill Clinton to begin a speech in the Botswana capital when an American Lutheran missionary approached with a bowl of mopane worms. The caterpillars had been boiled in salt water and left in the sun to dry. McCurry took the bait, gobbled down the caterpillar, and did it again for photographers. He evaluated the experience with a minimum of spin. "Tastes like a dead worm fried in oil," he said.

## Diana's armour on display at anti-landmines exhibition

LONDON (AP) — The body armour worn by Princess Diana when she visited Angolan minefields goes on display this week at a special exhibition at the Imperial War Museum called "Landmines: The Human Cost." The protective vest will be among photographs and other memorabilia documenting Diana's campaign for a worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines, which included a January 1997 visit to Angola.

## London Zoo installs buffer for April Fool's calls

LONDON (AFP) — London Zoo has installed a special buffer on its telephone system to stop its switchboard being plagued by April 1 pranksters. The Sunday Telegraph reported. "It might sound odd but it is quite necessary," said a spokesman. "On an ordinary day we get an average of one hoax call an hour, asking for people with names such as Mr. C. Lion, or Albert Ross, but on April Fool's Day the lines go crazy. There are literally hundreds of calls... if we let all the calls through the switchboard would collapse."

## Swedish driver, aged 104, causes traffic chaos

STOCKHOLM (R) — A 104-year-old Swedish man ran red lights, smashed into parked cars and mounted the kerb during an outing in his 1968 grey Ford Cortina, Swedish newspapers reported. They said the unnamed man could be the oldest person ever to face driving charges. Traffic patrols were called out when reports came in that a car was stuck crosswise across a street, unable to swing around in either direction, hitting two cars as it attempted to turn and causing a long queue. "You just have to be glad that he didn't run anyone over," Inspector Hans Rundqvist of the traffic police told the daily Expressen.

## Coma woman gives birth

ROME (APP) — A woman has given birth to a healthy baby girl despite being in a coma for six months, and doctors hope the experience will help her recover, according to press reports here. The 21-year-old woman has been in hospital after suffering a brain haemorrhage and falling into the coma six months ago, a few weeks after conception. Last week, in her seventh month of pregnancy, she gave birth to a girl, Shenon, who weighed 2.4 kg. When they laid the newborn baby upon her, the mother shed a tear, giving doctors hope that she is on the road to recovery.

## N. rights chief

ANKARA (AFP) — U.N. Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson said she expects to report to the commission on the human rights situation in Turkey. She is expected to visit Ankara and Istanbul in the coming days. Robinson is expected to meet with Turkish officials and to discuss the situation in the country. She is also expected to meet with the Turkish Cypriot community leaders. Robinson is expected to report to the commission on the human rights situation in Turkey. She is expected to visit Ankara and Istanbul in the coming days. Robinson is expected to meet with Turkish officials and to discuss the situation in the country. She is also expected to meet with the Turkish Cypriot community leaders.